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'MEA CULPA' OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Edited by
Kuncheria Pathil**

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‘Mea Culpa’ of Pope John Paul II

Edited by:
Kuncheria Pathil

Malloossery P.O.,
Kottayam - 686 041
Kerala, India

Tel: (91) (481) 2392530

Mob: 9249410650

E-mail: ktm_jeeva123@sancharnet.in

Web: www.jeevadhara.org

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Editorial

On March 12, 2000, the first Sunday of Lent, late Pope John Paul II celebrated the Holy Eucharist in St. Peter's along with the Cardinals and Officials of the Roman Curia. It was the Liturgical Celebration of the "Day of Pardon", as announced earlier, in preparation for crossing the threshold of the Third Millennium, and for the Great Jubilee Year. The Holy Father preached the homily on repentance for the past and present sins of the sons and daughters of the Church, reconciliation, forgiveness and the purification of memory, referring to the document, "Memory and Reconciliation", presented in the previous week by the International Theological Commission. After the homily, the Holy Father and some of the Cardinals and Officials of the Curia, in the place of the intercessory prayers, confessed some of the public sins of the Christian Communities of the past and present, and asked forgiveness and mercy from God. Seven items were there in those confessions of sins and prayers:

- (1) A General Confession of sin and prayer for conversion and purification of memory.
- (2) Sins of intolerance and violence against dissidents, Crusades, Inquisition etc.
- (3) Sins against the unity of the Body of Christ by Excommunications and Persecutions of Other Churches.
- (4) Sins against Jews, the People of the First Covenant.
- (5) Sins against Other Cultures and Religions.
- (6) Sins against Women, Other Races and Ethnic Groups.
- (7) Sins against Human Rights and Social Justice.

This number of *Jeevadhara* is an attempt to trace back, expose and elaborate some of the details of these sins and failures of the Catholic Church during its chequered history of two thousand years. The memory of history will help us not to repeat the mistakes of the past. The introductory article by Francis Mandapathikunnel and Jolly

Malieckal is a brief survey of the confessions of Pope John Paul II on the sins and mistakes of the Church of the past, that he made during his long pontificate, especially on the occasion of his pastoral visits and pilgrimages to several countries and during his meetings with the leaders and communities of other religions and Churches. The Pope thus presented to the World the image of a Church humble and sinful that needs repentance and conversion. His penitential act in Rome on March 12, 2000, was the climax of these series of confessions and craving for pardon.

In the second article, Joy Kakkanattu traces the roots of anti-Semitism, its development through history resulting in the persecution of the Jews and the strong denunciation of it by Vatican II in the decree of *Nostra Aetate*. Christianity's central doctrine of Jesus Christ as the Messiah and the Son of God was unacceptable to the Jews, and therefore they looked at Christians with contempt and aversion. Correspondingly, the Christian attitude towards them was polemical and inimical as the guilt of the death of Jesus Christ was attributed to the entire Jewish race. When Christianity became identified with the Roman Empire, anti-Semitism showed its ugly head in the form of political and legal discrimination against the Jews. In modern times, the racist theory that the Arian race is superior to the non-Arian races strengthened the discrimination and oppression against the Semitic races. It culminated in the programme of Nazi anti-Semitism that sent millions of Jews to concentration camps and gas chambers. The Western Churches were also directly or indirectly responsible for the atrocities against them. Vatican II strongly condemned all forms of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews, expressed profound regret over the strained relationship with the 'people of the first covenant', and initiated friendly and serious dialogues with them.

The Crusades were the so-called 'Holy Wars' waged by Western Christian nations and the Church authorities against the Muslim rulers who conquered the 'Holy Land' of Palestine. For Christians pilgrimage to the Holy Land was very important and it was alleged that for the safety and security of the Christian pilgrims, it was necessary to recapture and liberate the Holy Land. Sebastian Edathikkavil traces the history of the Crusades which spread over the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. In the Crusades political and economic motives were

mingled with the religious ones, and in fact, the atrocities of the Crusaders were such that even the Eastern Christians were horrified by their barbaric and cruel behavior. Thousands of Muslims and Jews were brutally killed and their mosques and synagogues were destroyed. Most of the Crusades were a failure and it could only perpetuate the attitude of hatred, enmity and revenge on the part of Muslims towards Christians. John Paul II appealed both to Muslims and Christians to heal their negative and painful memories and to pardon each other and to look towards a better future for all.

'Inquisition' was another sin of the past specially mentioned by the Pope. It was a Christian institution and agency of the Middle Ages to bring to trial all heretics, punish them when found guilty, and thus eliminate all heresies from the Church. In the Inquisition both the religious and secular authorities collaborated very closely. Thomas Anchukandam briefly presents its history, its medieval set-up and background and its ring-leaders as well as a few prominent cases of victims. The harshness of the procedures, the cruelty of the penalties given, including burning at stake, and the denial of human rights and justice made the inquisition notorious. The Holy Father very often confessed the methods of intolerance and even of violence used by the Church and the errors of Inquisition and called for repentance and judgment in the light of the principles of the Gospel.

Pushpa Joseph exposes the sin against women in the Church by exploring the relationship of the Church to women in the different periods of the history of the Church. The attitude and prejudice against women has its philosophical and theological underpinnings of a distorted and dualistic anthropology where women are considered inferior, weak and evil. Sins against women are sins against the half of humanity and therefore it affects the human family as a whole. The author also interprets the meaning of 'memory'. Memory is "remembering" the dismembered. Pardon and reconciliation is possible if only the truth of women's personhood and complementarity are acknowledged, accepted and put into real practice both in the Church and the society. Such an act of remembering the sins against women is a sign and act of hope that the Spirit of God breathes life into our midst.

Sins against other cultures, religions and other Churches are also mentioned and confessed by the Pope. Originally we had planned two more articles on them. However, for lack of space we could not include them. We are sorry for that. Christianity's negative attitude and approach to other religions and cultures and the Catholic Church's negative attitude towards other Christian Churches are well known and have been very widely discussed in recent times. Early Church's approach to other religions was negative, polemical and very aggressive. The other religions were considered as mere magic, man-made, evil as if devil's work. Even a great saint and missionary like Francis Xavier in India in the 16th century wrote to his superiors in Portugal that Hinduism was of the devil and that it must be destroyed at the earliest. The missionary policy of the period was conquest of all religions and conversion of all people to Christianity by all possible means. It was due to the discovery of the human and spiritual values of other religions by various sciences that Christianity slowly developed a positive approach towards other religions. In recent times, Vatican II, in its document, *Nostra Aetate*, called on all Christians to acknowledge, protect, and promote all the positive values of other religions and to enter into friendly and serious dialogues with them.

With the identification of Christianity and the Roman empire in Europe, what is known as 'Christendom' gradually emerged in Europe. It was a political, economic, cultural and religious synthesis, the product of a perfect fusion between Christian faith and the European society and culture. The European Colonial Powers with their political conquest of Asia, Latin America and Africa, introduced the Western form of Christianity into these colonies as the only valid type of Christianity. They looked at other cultures with contempt and in a way disregarded them or even tried to destroy them. Whether in liturgy or theology or customs and traditions, the missionary Churches were made the exact replica of the Western Church. Discovery and recognition of the values of other peoples and their cultures is a recent phenomenon. Vatican II and Pope John Paul II confessed the mistakes of the aggressive mission policies of the Colonial period and made strong appeals for inculturation of the Christian faith into the cultures of all peoples. Inculturation is the task and responsibility of the local Churches for which they need legitimate autonomy and self-

sufficiency. Christian faith and Gospel must be lived and celebrated in the actual context of the life and culture of the people.

Pope John Paul II very often in his meetings with the Orthodox and Protestant Churches confessed the sins against the unity of the Body of Christ committed by all the Churches, especially by the Catholic Church by excommunication and persecution of the other Churches. The divisions between the Churches very often had happened not so much on account of the difference in faith, but on account of theological, political, linguistic and cultural differences. In the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in the 5th century, Patriarch Nestorius was trailed and excommunicated even before his arrival in the Council, and he had to go into exile. Today all the Churches agree that in the Christological controversies of the 5th century, there were no real differences in faith, but only misunderstandings and confusion due to the differences in language and philosophical categories. In the mutual condemnations of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches in the 11th century, no issue of faith and dogma was involved, but only socio-cultural and political differences. In the 16th century, when the Catholic Church was corrupt from top to bottom, the Reformers demanded several changes and reform in the spirit of the Gospel, though some of the Reformers went to the extreme. The response of the Roman Catholic Church of the period, however, was not one of listening, repentance and readiness to change, but of total rejection and condemnation of the Reformers. But today Vatican II has made a lot of changes in the Church and some of them had been the same as demanded by the Reformers of the 16th century. During the Reformation the bone of contention was Luther's doctrine of "Justification by Faith". Recently in a joint statement of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches in Germany, theologians and Church leaders on both sides agreed that today they are no more divided on the doctrine of "Justification". Repentance and confession of the past sins will definitely make changes on all sides and produce positive results in our search for the unity of the Churches.

We would like to make here a strong appeal to all the Churches in India: Inspired by the confessions of sins (*mea culpa*) of Pope John Paul II and following his great example, the Indian Churches with the initiatives of their leadership should make a public confession of

their sins both of the past and present. The first to confess is probably the past sins against the other religions in India. All the Indian Churches had been apparently involved, to a certain extent, in proselytism when they were working among the poor and the marginalized. Conversion issue has been and is the bone of contention between the Churches and the Hindu nationalist political parties and groups. While confessing our sins, we must clearly state that conversion by inducement or other unhealthy means is considered sinful by us, while at the same time we should safeguard and strongly endorse the freedom of religion for individuals and groups. Freedom of religion, guaranteed and protected by our Indian Constitution, shall not be infringed upon by any individual or group. Another sin to confess is the practice of caste system by many Churches both in the past and present, also within the Churches themselves. This sin must be publicly confessed and a firm resolution must be made by all the Churches to fight against caste system without any compromise. A third sin is our apparently negative attitude towards the Indian cultures, especially those of the little people and the tribals. The Churches in the past never took seriously the process of inculturation in its ways of worship, administration, customs and theology. The Churches in India must become fully 'local Churches' and become 'fully Indian'.

These and similar other sins of omission and commission should be confessed by the Churches today publicly. It requires on their part great courage, faith, hope, honesty, humility and commitment to truth. When individual Christians confess their sins, they receive God's grace, greater strength, confidence, purification of memory and peace of mind. Churches or Christian communities in India need to do the same today to mark a turning point in its life and ministry. May God and our Lord Jesus Christ help us to take this leap in the faith!

Associate General Editor
Jeevadhara

Kuncheria Pathil

The 'Mea Culpa' of John Paul II

A Survey of the Pope's Confessions

Francis Mandapathikunnel and Jolly Malieckal

Francis Mandapathikunnel and Jolly Malieckal are new graduates in theology from Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. Their Research Papers for graduation were on Pope John Paul II. They present here a brief survey of the confessions of Pope John Paul II on the sins and mistakes of the Church of the past. Pope John Paul II was a 'Pilgrim Pope' and during his pilgrimages and pastoral visits to several countries and during his meetings with the leaders and communities of the other religions and Churches, he often publicly confessed the sins and mistakes of the members of the Catholic Church. The survey covers the major areas and topics of his confession.

Pope John Paul II made an unprecedented apology for the sins of the sons and daughters of the Church down through the centuries, during the Holy Eucharist at St. Peter's on March 12, 2000. 'We forgive and we ask forgiveness', the Pope said during that moving homily. At the conclusion of the penitential liturgy, the Pope embraced and kissed the crucifix and in the final blessing, declared that never again should such sins be ever committed. A Pope who is 'infallible' is asking pardon for the manifold sins committed by the sons and daughters of the Church in her name. Never before have we seen a Pope asking pardon with such intensity and fervour. Never before has the world seen a Bishop of Rome showing such humility and spirit of reconciliation.

The 'Mea culpa' of John Paul II along with some of the Cardinals and officials of the Curia on March 12 was, in fact, the climax of a silent yet sincere effort to ask forgiveness for the sins committed by

the members of the Church. He had undertaken the mission of asking forgiveness way back when he was cardinal Wojtyla. This could be seen in the process of reconciliation initiated between Polish and German episcopates to heal the wounds of World War II that culminated in the visit of a Polish delegation to their German colleagues in September, 1978. Cardinal Wojtyla delivered two discourses at Fulda. During a homily at the Cathedral in Fulda on September 22, he stated that the meeting had reinforced the two Churches in truth and in love and it has helped to heal the wounds of the past, both ancient and more recent. Cardinal Wojtyla accelerated the pace of his reconciliation mission after his election as Pope John Paul II.

Each of his pastoral journeys was a particular instance of his remembering the sins of the past committed in that land. For instance in his message to the indigenous peoples of America he said, "As pastor of the Church, I ask you in the name of Jesus Christ to pardon those who have offended you; I ask you to pardon those who have caused pain to you and your ancestors during these 500 years" (Oct. 21, 1992). Each of his visits turned to be a pilgrimage seeking forgiveness. This long and historical process had a natural climax on the occasion of the Jubilee Celebrations of the year 2000. We are trying to make a survey of the Pope's confessions about the seven fold 'Mea Culpa'. The task is, indeed, an enormous one and hence we would be presenting only the most important texts.

1. A General Confession of Sin and Prayer for Conversion and Purification of Memory

The Pope made it clear that the Mea Culpa is not a judgment on the subjective status of the brothers and sisters who preceded the present generation (John Paul II, Services at St. Peter's Basilica Requesting Pardon, p. 40). Rather the act carved out on March 12 is a sincere acknowledgment of the faults committed by the children of the Church in the remote and recent past, and a humble supplication for God's forgiveness. It was a general confession of sins committed by the members of the Church without any subjective reference. This will no doubt awaken consciences, enabling Christians to enter the third millennium with more openness to God and to his plan of love.

Pope had asked forgiveness for the general failure of all the Christians. In this sense, he has shown himself as the moral leader of

the entire Christian community. Analyzing the role played by Christians in the World War II, Pope is humble enough to confess the deplorable role played by even devout Christians as regards the evils of the war:

Time and again nations and factions full of hatred have waged cruel wars against one another, time and again people have been deprived of their homes; they have been driven into exile or forced to flee from misery, discrimination and persecution. Millions of people have been killed on the grounds of their race, their nationality, their convictions, or simply because they were deemed undesirable. It is a depressing thought that devout Christians were among those who oppressed and persecuted their fellow human beings. (Discourse at Heldenplatz, Vienna, September 10, 1983).

This message of conversion and penance is recurring in the many pronouncements of John Paul II. By analyzing the forms and roots of enmity still prevailing in various parts of the world, he urges all for a genuine reconciliation and prays for the conversion of heart. He asks forgiveness of the entire humanity for the strife and violence. "There is no other answer to such questions but a humble request for pardon for ourselves and for all. It is precisely for this reason that our prayer vigil is also a vigil of penance, of conversion." (Prayer Vigil for Peace in Europe, Assisi, January 9, 1993).

Pope's way of acting created some alarm in the Vatican. An extraordinary consistory of Cardinals was called and a twenty-three page of memorandum entitled: 'Reflections on the Great Jubilee of the Year Two Thousand' was circulated among Cardinals. Some of them supported the initiatives of the Pope, but a few of them argued about the wisdom of asking forgiveness about the past sins for which the present generation is not at all responsible. But Pope went ahead with his courageous decision and he explained his reasons about the need for the Church to ask Mea Culpa in the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*: "She (Church) cannot cross the threshold of the new millennium without encouraging her children to purify themselves, through repentance of past errors and instances of infidelity, inconsistency, and slowness to act. Acknowledging the weaknesses of the past is an act of honesty and courage which helps us to strengthen our faith, which alerts us to face today's temptations

and challenges, and prepares us to meet them" (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 33).

John Paul II was destined by God to lead the Church into the third millennium. He did it exceedingly well in a way less burdened by the weight of history, better reconciled with the other Christian Communities, in a bond of friendship with all men of good will and above all with a purified memory. His call for asking and giving forgiveness cleared the conscience of the children of the Church whereby they could march with Christian love and hope afresh into the third millennium.

Pope John Paul has used the phrase purification of memory in connection with the need of expressing a unified Christian witness. First and foremost, and in the dynamics of the movement towards unity, our personal and community memory must be purified of the memory of all the conflicts, injustice and hatred of the past. He also shows the most appropriate way for this purification. "This purification is carried out through mutual forgiveness, from the depth of our hearts, which is the condition of the blossoming of real brotherly charity, a charity that is not resentful and that excuses every thing." (Meeting with the Leaders of Other Christian Communities, Paris, May 31, 1980).

2. Sins of Intolerance and Violence against Dissidents, Crusades and Inquisitions

a) Sins Against Dissidents

A classical example of the intolerance shown by the Church would be the Galileo case. Pope compares him to Einstein while reopening the Galileo case at a meeting with the members of pontifical Academy of the Sciences at a ceremony commemorating Einstein in November 1979, one year after his election to the papal throne. "The greatness of Galileo is known to every one, like that of Einstein: but unlike the latter, whom we are honoring today before the College of Cardinals, in the apostolic palace, the former had to suffer a great deal - we cannot conceal the fact - at the hands of men and organisms of the Church" (Apostolic Palace, November 10, 1979).

Cardinal Paul Poupard summarized the faults in 1992 and the Pope acknowledged the mistakes and suggested other means of establishing

rapport between faith and science, as a result of the re-examination of the Galileo case. "From the Galileo affair we can learn a lesson which remains valid in relation to similar situations which occur today and which may occur in future... Another lesson which we draw is that the different branches of knowledge call for different methods" (Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Apostolic Palace, October 31, 1992).

b) Sins During Crusades

Pope John Paul II is the first one to call Muslims 'brothers', using the title the Christian tradition reserves for 'brothers in faith', namely, other baptized persons. The boldness of the Pope's gesture is seen when Pope visited Nigeria. In his public address he calls them by using the title 'brothers and sisters'. "All of us, Christians and Muslims, live under the scan of the one merciful God. We both believe in the one God who is the creator of man. Thus, in a true sense, we can call one another brothers and sisters in faith in the one God (Address to the Governor and Civil Authorities, Kaduna, Nigeria, February 14, 1982).

Another significant initiative by the Pope was when he spoke to a crowd of young Muslims in 1985. He made mention of the old wars and the need for future collaborations. "Christians and Muslims, in general we have badly understood each other. And sometimes, in the past, we have opposed and even exhausted each other in polemics and in wars. I believe that, today, God invites us to change our old practices. We must stimulate each other in good works on the path of God" (Meeting with Young Muslims, Casablanca, Morocco, August 19, 1985).

Pope knew well that it was his predecessors who had arranged the crusades. Now he looks toward to the purification of such memories by mutual forgiveness. In the message Cardinal Arinze sent to the Muslims in the name of the Pope we read: "The time has come to free our memories of the negative consequences of the past, however painful they may be, and look resolutely towards the future... we need mutual pardon (Message of Cardinal Francis Arinze to Muslims to mark the end of Ramadan, February 15, 1996).

c) Sin of the Inquisition

Holy father mentioned the methods of intolerance and even of

violence that Church men in his Apostolic letter. "Another painful chapter of history to which the sons and daughters of the Church must return with a spirit of repentance is that of the acquiescence given, especially in certain centuries, to intolerance and even to the use of violence in the services of truth" (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 35).

It was during his first visit to Spain in 1982 that Pope John Paul II explicitly spoke about the errors of the inquisition for the first time.

If in certain moments such as those of the Inquisition there were tensions, errors and excesses – facts which the Church today can consider in the objective light of history – it is necessary to acknowledge that the Spanish intellectual climate of the time was such that they were able to reconcile in an amazing way the demands of complete freedom of research with a profound sense of the church (Meeting with the Academic and Scientific world of the university, Madrid, November 3, 1982).

In the memorandum sent to the cardinals early in 1994 in the Extraordinary Consistory, Pope explicitly speaks about the errors of the Inquisition and the necessity of the present day Church to judge them in the light of the principles of the Gospel.

How can we remain silent in the face of so many forms of violence perpetrated in the name of the faith? Religious wars, the courts of the Inquisition and other forms of violations of the rights of individuals... It is also necessary, in the light of what the Vatican Council has said, that the Church, on its own initiative, should look again at the dark aspects of its own history, judging it in the light of the principles of the gospel (From the memorandum sent to the cardinals, Spring, 1994).

3. Sins Against the Unity of the Body of Christ

Pope had already emphasized the need to own the mistakes of the past against the unity of the Church by excommunication and persecution of other Churches at a meeting in Mainz with representatives of the Council of the German Evangelical churches way back in 1980.

Our being together in your German homeland confronts us with the events of the Reformation. We must think of what preceded it and of what happened since. If we do not evade the facts,

we realize that the faults of men led to the unhappy division of Christians, and that our faults again hinder the possible and necessary steps towards unity... In the school of the Apostle to the Gentiles we can become aware that we all need conversion... "Let us no more pass judgment on one another." (Rom 14:13). Let us rather recognize our guilt (Meeting with Representatives of the Council of the German Evangelical Church, Mainz, Germany, November 17, 1980).

In the ecumenical celebration held in Germany in June 22, 1996, Pope calls for repentance and purification with regard to the division of the Church due to reformation.

Luther's call for Church reform in its original meaning was an appeal for repentance and renewal, which must begin in the life of every individual. Nevertheless, there are many reasons why division arose from this beginning. Among them is that failure in the Catholic Church for which Pope Adrian VI had already grieved in moving words... We are all guilty. For this reason we are all invited to repentance and we all need to be purified again and again by the Lord (Ecumenical Celebration, Paderborn, Germany, June 22, 1996).

The heart of the Pope beat in unison with the separated brethren of the Eastern Orthodox churches. When the Pope visited his motherland he held an ecumenical meeting with the Orthodox brethren in their Cathedral at Bialystok. Incidentally, this cathedral was constructed on the site of the former Catholic Cathedral of the Eastern rite, which had been demolished by the Czarist Government. Pope gave the following message where he highlighted the need of mutual forgiveness: "The sad experiences of the past still live in the memory of all. We all bear the yoke of historical faults; we have all made mistakes... With profound and sincere sorrow let us admit this before God today, asking him to forgive us: Lord, have mercy on us!" (Meeting with the Orthodox, Bialystok, Poland, June 5, 1991).

In his apostolic letter, *Orientalis Lumen*, Pope had urged for taking courageous steps to combat the sin of separation. Here he explicitly mentions the scandals created by the lack of Christian unity in clear words. "In the course of the 1,000 years now drawing to a close, even more than in the first millennium, ecclesial communion has been painfully wounded, "a fact for which, often enough, men of both sides

were to blame". The sin of our separation is very serious... We have deprived the world of a joint witness that could perhaps have avoided so many tragedies and even changed the course of history" (Apostolic Letter, *Orientale Lumen*, May 2, 1995).

As a result of the apostolic letter, there followed the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and in the common declaration signed by the Pope and the Patriarch we have an invitation for forgiveness and reconciliation.

In the course of history and in the more recent past there have been attacks and acts of oppression on both sides. As we prepare, on this occasion, to ask the Lord for his great mercy, we invite all to forgive one another and to express a firm will that a new relationship of brotherhood and active collaboration will be established (Common Declaration of John Paul II and the Patriarch Bartholomew, June 29, 1995).

4. Sins Against the Jews, the People of the First Covenant

Pope John Paul II on numerous occasions had admitted the historical responsibility of the Church for the persecution of Jews. When he visited the synagogues in Rome in April 1986, he deplored the displays of anti-Semitism leveled at any time or from any source against the Jews. And he repeated the phrase 'from any source' and some theologians have seen the hands of his predecessors in this emphatic expression.

Nevertheless, a consideration of centuries – long cultural conditioning could not prevent us from recognizing that the acts of discrimination, unjustified limitation of religious freedoms, oppression also on the level of civil freedom in regard to the Jews were, from one objective point of view, gravely deplorable manifestations. Yet once again, through myself, the church, in the words of the well known declaration *Nostra Aetate* (4), 'deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone', I repeat: 'By any one' (Visit to the Synagogue in Rome, April 13, 1986).

John Paul II had expressed deep sorrow for the sin of indifference committed by Christians. We quote his words from his letter to the President of American Bishop's Conference. "There is no doubt that the suffering inflicted upon the Jews are also for the Catholic Church

a reason for deep sorrow, especially if we think of indifference and sometimes' resentment that in particular historical situations have divided the Jews and Christians. Certainly this calls for yet stronger resolutions to cooperate for justice and true peace" (Letter to the President of the Conference of Bishops of the United States, August, 1987).

He also expressed profound sorrow at the strained relationship between the people of the first covenant in one of his Sunday messages: "Considering all that, the remembrance of the tensions that have too often marked the relationship between Christian and Jews cannot help but arouse great sorrow" (Sunday Angelus, January 12, 1996).

In the prayer made by the Pope to mark the end of European Synod, the sin of indifference of Christians during Holocaust was also mentioned.

Lord, our liberator, we of the Christian communities of Europe have not always obeyed your precept but... we have followed worldly prudence with wars of religion, with struggles of Christians against Christians, with indifference in the face of persecutions and the Holocaust of the Jews, with furious attacks against so many of the just. Pardon us and have mercy on us (Prayer at the Ecumenical Service marking the end of the European Synod, December 7, 1991).

5. Sins Against Other Cultures and Religions

Pope said 'Mea Culpa' for the sins committed by the sons and daughters of the Church against other cultures and religion. He has spoken against the injustices rendered to the Indians of the American Continent in a categorical way. On October 13, 1992, during the fifth century of the discovery of America, Holy Father went to Santo Domingo and spoke about the shortcomings of the children of the Church towards the natives.

How could the Church, which has always been close to indigenous people... forget in this fifth century the enormous sufferings inflicted on the inhabitants of this continent during the period of the conquest and colonization? It is necessary to acknowledge in all sincerity the abuses committed due to the lack of love on the part of those persons who were unable to see the natives as their brothers, as children of the same Father (Message to the Indians, Santa Domingo, October 13, 1992).

On his return to Rome, Pope explicitly asked pardon to Indians and Africans for the inhuman treatment shown to them often with the tacit permission of the Church. "We do not cease asking these people for forgiveness. This request for pardon is primarily addressed to the first inhabitants of the new land, the Indians and then to those who were brought from Africa as slaves to do heavy labor" (General Audience, St. Peter's, Rome, October 21, 1992).

He also mentioned the cultural intolerances practiced by the missionaries of the past. Missionaries of the medieval age identified Christian religion with European culture and for them all other cultures were inferior. Pope owns this mistake: "It is clear from the historical record that over the centuries your people have been repeatedly the victims of injustice by newcomers, who in their blindness often saw your culture as inferior... It is time for forgiveness, for reconciliation and for a commitment to building new relationships" (Address to Inuit Indians, Yellow knife, Canada, September 18, 1894).

In November 1986, Pope visited Australia and then he spoke against the insensitive and deplorable sins committed against the 'aborigines' of the land.

Christian people of good will are saddened to realize – many of them only recently – for how long a time Aboriginal people were transported from their home-lands into small areas or reserves where families were broken up, tribes split apart, children orphaned and people forced to live like, exiles in a foreign country (Address to the Aborigines, Alien Springs, Australia, November 29, 1986).

Pope also mentions the cultural oppression of the Indians by the colonial masters. He opened out his heart when he met Indians in 1987. "The cultural oppression, the injustices, the disruption of your life and of your traditional societies must be acknowledged... Now, we are called to learn from the mistakes of the past and we must work together for reconciliation and healing, as brothers and sisters in Christ" (Phoenix, Arizona, September 14, 1987).

In the Ramadan message addressed to Muslims in the name of the Pope by Cardinal Arinze, we find mention of the need for reconciliation and forgiveness among Christians and Muslims.

Muslims and Christians can become, in today's world, examples of reconciliation and instruments of peace... It is not only the weight of the past that has to be taken account. The grievous conflict in Bosnia – Herzegovina has been falsely interpreted by some as an example of Christian-Muslims Confrontation (Message of Cardinal Francis Avinze to Muslims to mark the end of Ramadan, February 15, 1996).

6. Sins Against Women, Other Races and Ethnic Groups

The many statements of the Pope which we give below manifest the particular affection which he had for women in the Church. He radically revises the traditional papal attitude towards women with his bold pastoral moves. Luigi Accattoli in his famous book 'When a Pope asks Forgiveness' rightly observes: "Popes have never before been seen to kiss little girls, hug them, take them by the hand or almost dance with them. Even this change of behavior has been, in its own way, a revision of history" (*When a Pope asks forgiveness*, p-106).

In his document *Mulieris Dignitatem* there is no explicit Mea Culpa, but here he corrects some of the traditional view points about the teaching of St. Paul which, infact, no Pope has ever made. "All the suggestions in favour of the subjection of woman to man in marriage must be understood in the sense of mutual subjections of both out of reverence for Christ" (*Mulieris Dignitatem*, 9:24).

In his Sunday Angelus message given in 1995 John Paul II made the first explicit admission of the historical responsibility of the Church in regard to the treatment of women.

The Lord's attitude was a consistent protest against whatever offends the dignity of woman... In the first steps of her divine Founder, the Church become the convinced bearer of the message. If down the centuries some of her children have at times not lived it with the same consistency, this is a reason for deep regret. The gospel message about women, however, has lost none of its timeliness (Sunday Angelus, June 25, 1995).

One of the most beautiful statements on women by Pope is found in his request for forgiveness that is contained in his letter to women.

Thank you, every woman, for the simple fact of being a woman!
... I know of course that simply saying thank you is not enough...

Women's dignity has often been unacknowledged and their prerogatives misrepresented; they have often been relegated to the margin of society and even reduced to servitude ... And if objective blames, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, for in the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision (Letter to women, June 29, 1995).

He even spoke about *rewriting history* whereby the equal status and contributions of women would be taken into consideration. "It would be appropriate to rewrite history in a less one-sided way. Unfortunately, a certain way of writing history has paid greater attention to extraordinary and sensational events than to the daily rhythm of life, and the restricting history in almost one concerned with the achievements of men. This tendency should be revised" (Sunday Angelus, July 30, 1995).

He also favors participation of women in the life of the Church and also in consultation and the process of coming to decisions. It is not just in consultation, they are favored to give a role in the 'process' of coming to decisions (*Propositio* 47, cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 51). In his Sunday message he speaks about this great advantage of having women fully involved in the activities of the Church. "Who can image the great advantages to pastoral care and the new beauty that the Church's face will assume, when the feminine genius is fully involved in the various areas of her life" (Sunday Angelus, September 3, 1995).

In his Apostolic Letter *Vita Consecrata* Pope again mentions the role of the women in the decision making process. "It is therefore urgently necessary to take certain concrete steps, beginning with providing rooms for women to participate in different fields and at all levels, including decision making process above all in matters which concern women themselves" (Apostolic Letter, *Vita Consecrata*, March 1996).

Pope has also spoken against racisms and condemned its various forms. He also acknowledged the responsibility of Catholics or at least implied it. In the Pontifical Commission he spoke about the sinful limitations of the children of the Church regarding social abuses. "Despite the sinful limitation of her members, yesterday and today.

she is aware of having been constituted a witness to Christ's charity on earth, a sign and instrument of the amity of humankind (Pontifical Commission, *Justitia et Pax*, November 3, 1988).

Pope John Paul II reacted very strongly against the ethnic violence erupted in Rwanda and urged all to come to the peace of God.

All the members of the Church who sinned during the genocide must have the courage to bear the consequences of the deeds they committed against God and against their neighbour... I invite you all, bishops, priests, religious, lay people, of different ethnic origins, to turn to God with a sincere heart, to forgive and to be reconciled (Letter to Bishop Thaddeus Ntihin Yurwa, President of the Conference of Bishops of Rwanda, March 14, 1996).

Pope John Paul uttered his strongest words against the sinful treatment of Blacks in February 1992, when he visited the island of Gor'ee (Senegal). His visit to the 'slave house' touched him and he asks heaven's pardon in moving words. "In all truth and humility this sin of man against man, this sin of man against God, must be confessed... From this African Shrine of Black sorrow, we implore heaven's forgiveness"(Meeting with the Catholic Community, Senegal, February 22, 1992).

He even acknowledged that the previous prohibitions of his predecessors were not enough, something which very few Popes have ever dared to say. "As regards slavery in Africa, I have already had an opportunity to implore heaven's forgiveness for the shameful slave trade... The severe prohibitions of my venerable predecessors, Pius II in 1462 and Urban VIII in 1623, were not enough in those deplorable times... (Ad Limina Visit of Brazilian Bishops, St. Peter's, April 1, 1995).

7. Sins Against Human Rights and Social Justice

In the preceding sections we found the quotes of John Paul II whereby he denounced and asked pardon for the sins of inhuman treatment rendered to Natives and Blacks. This concept of social injustice is further elaborated in many of his pronouncements. Pope mentions these sins against human rights and social justice as sins against Charity.

We must recognize the fact that, since the Church is a

community, which is also composed of sinners, the precept of love has at times been transgressed over the centuries... Conscious of their own vocation to love according to Christ's example, Christians confess their sins against love with humility and repentance... the history of the Church abounds in sins against charity, which causes sadness and pain... (General Audience, St. Peter's, June 3, 1992).

In addressing the European Economic Community at Brussels in 1985, Pope admitted the responsibility of Christians for international sins of injustice and for sins during the colonial period.

However, our predecessors also opened new ways towards other inhabited lands... They go to plant the cross... But at the same time they are conquerors, they want to impose their cultures, they appropriate the riches of other ethnic groups whose tradition they often disdain and whom they too often cruelly subject to their power (Visit to the European Economic Community, Brussels, May 20, 1985).

In his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* Pope urges the Church to sell her costly and luxurious furnishings for providing the basic needs of the people who are suffering. "Faced by cases of need, one cannot ignore them in favour of superfluous Church ornaments and costly furnishings for divine worship; on the contrary it should be obligatory to sell these goods in order to provide food, shelter, clothing for those who lack these things..." (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 31).

Pope also mentioned the sins of omission, which consist in the failure to denounce injustices. This text is important since here we find the sin of the 'Church' and not perhaps the sins of her children. The sin of omission is that the 'Church' is not asserting strongly against the social injustices. "It is not God's will that some waste while the others go hungry... it should not be that the rich and the strong enjoy privileges while injustice is reserved for the poor and the disabled... Does the Church assert this strongly enough? Perhaps not... we are the Church, you and I" (Meeting with Youth, Strasbourg, October 8, 1988).

A confession of the abuses against justice, often connected with every other kind of sin, is contained in a prayer approved by Pope for the celebration of the closing of the European Synod in 1991:

O Lord, our Reconciler, in the Christian communities of Europe our divisions, our egoism and the scandals of those who say they belong to Christ but lack the power and authority to work for peace, justice and liberty, have weakened in the conscience of the people their faith in the new life which you have brought. Pardon us and have pity on us (Ecumenical Celebration, St. Peter's, December 7, 1991).

Conclusion

The Mea Culpa of Pope John Paul II on March 12 was thus not a lone historical event: rather it was the climax of a process of giving and asking forgiveness which permeated the preceding years of his pontificate. Pope John Paul II was a pilgrim Pope and the more he travelled, the more he learned about the sins of the Christians and the more he knew such sins, the more he asked reconciliation. Another characteristic feature of his Mea Culpa was his firm resolve not to commit the sins again, which were once committed in the past. Thus by purifying the memory of the past history, Pope John Paul II led the Church to the advent of the Third Millennium. At the beginning of the second millennium we find a Pope Gregory the Great, asserting his primacy. Here at the dawn of the third millennium we find Pope John Paul II kneeling before the crucifix and requesting or rather begging pardon for the past sins. His Mea Culpa would be perhaps one of the most significant events of his long pontificate and might persuade the coming generations to call him John Paul, the Great. The celebration of the Day of Pardon was expressly desired by the Holy Father as a powerful sign in the Jubilee year, which was by its very nature a moment of conversion. "As the successor of Peter, I ask that in this year of mercy the Church, strong in the holiness which she receives from her Lord, should kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters... Christians are invited to acknowledge, before God and before those offended by their actions, the faults which they have committed" (*Incarnationis Mysterium*, 11).

Anti-Semitism and Persecution of the Jews

J.P. Kakkanattu

Joy Kakkanattu teaches the Old Testament at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. He introduces here the sin of 'anti-Semitism' committed by Christians and confessed by Pope John Paul II. He traces the roots of anti-Semitism, its development through history that led to the persecution of the Jews. Vatican II in the decree *Nostra Aetate* denounced in very strong words the 'anti-Semitism' and called for friendly relations with the People of the Old Covenant.

The term "anti-Semitism" was coined only in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr, but thenceforth became a designation to refer to a far older phenomenon of inimical attitude and mind-set against the Jewish people. Even though there are other groups of people who can equally be considered of Semitic ethnicity, the term anti-Semitism pertains only to the hateful attitude towards the Jews. As Holsten puts it, "Anti-Semitism comprises a whole gamut of feelings and relationships against the Jews, ranging from an instinctive aversion, which does not tolerate the slightest advantage to a Jew, to a hatred, which sets the systematic extermination of the Jew as its fixed objective."¹ To put more succinctly: anti-Semitism is a collective hatred against the Jewish people.

Anti-Semitism is a multifarious phenomenon, whose ramifications are so complex – which involve politics, sociology, religion, ethnicity, psychology and what not – that it will remain an illusion to deal with it

1 W. Holsten, "Antisemitismus," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (ed. K. Gallig), vol. I (1957), 456.

in a comprehensive manner in this article. What is intended here is to present a brief history of anti-Semitism in view of understanding the repudiation of any form of anti-Semitism by the Second Vatican Council through its proclamation, *Nostra Aetate*.

1. Pre-Christian Era

If one seeks to understand the roots and history of anti-Semitism one needs to start right from the last few centuries of pre-Christian era.

In the ancient city of Alexandria in Egypt anti-Jewish ideology was very prevalent. Josephus wrote that it was in Egypt (Alexandria) that the slanderous accusation against the Jews had its beginning.² For Josephus the reason for this anti-Judaism was based on the early history of the two nations (the Israelites' stay in Egypt and the subsequent abandoning of it in the Exodus) and the difference of the Israelite religion from that of the Egyptians'. Thus Josephus made the Exodus as the central issue of the anti-Jewish polemics. The anti-Jewish propaganda in the early Roman period was not limited to the city of Alexandria. Josephus mentions other places and writers who were opponents of the Jews. Philo in his writing, *In Flaccum* describes the anti-Jewish policy of the Roman officer Flaccus, a close companion of Tiberius Caesar.³ Hence it is clear that an anti-Jewish outlook already existed before the dawn of Christianity.

2. New Testament Period

With the dawn of Christianity and the writing of the New Testament, anti-Semitism entered a new phase. The rapport between the two religions became more and more tense as Christianity – itself considered at the outset as a sect of Judaism – began to differentiate itself from Judaism. At the same time, it conserved many elements from Judaism. Some of the doctrines of Christianity like Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Son of God were totally unacceptable

2 See *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (trans. W. Whiston; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 787.

3 See *The Works of Philo: Complete and unabridged* (trans. C.D. Yonge; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 725 ff.

to Judaism and these caused total rupture from it. The Jews started looking at Christians with contempt and aversion and anti-Christian remarks appeared in various rabbinic writings. The attitude of Christianity towards the Jews in the early centuries was also polemical; later it became inimical and eventually evolved into excessive anti-Semitism during the medieval period and the centuries thereafter.⁴

The role of the New Testament references and allusions to the Jews and their opposition to Jesus in fermenting anti-Semitism is a controversial issue. One view, mainly held by Jewish writers, holds that the accusations against the Jews in the gospels provided the seed for the later development of anti-Jewish theories in the Church, starting from the Church Fathers. *Encyclopedia Judaica*'s statement is representative of this view, "The anti-Jewish theories developed by the Church Fathers are pre-eminently variations or extensions of the first accusations levelled in the Gospels."⁵ This view cannot be endorsed as such. The New Testament does not use any anti-Jewish language, which was current in the Greek anti-Semitic texts. Many of the remarks on the Jews and Jewish sects in the New Testament should be evaluated taking into account the fact that the New Testament authors, who were themselves Jews, looked at Judaism not as a foreign entity, but as the religion of their own ancestors, and hence we cannot attribute to these authors anti-Semitism as we understand it today. More feasible is to take those polemical references to the Jews (cf. Mat 27:25; John 8:44) as mere inner-Jewish conflict rather than anti-Jewish remarks. What Francis Maloney writes about the notion of "the Jews" in the gospel of John can broadly be taken as true of all the gospels:

Jewish people as such are not represented by the term "the Jews", and the Fourth Gospel must not be read as if they were. Both "the Jews" and many members of the Johannine community were Jews, and the expression "the Jews" in the Gospel indicates those people who have taken up a theological

4 *Editoriale*, "Problemi e prospettive del dialogo tra cristiani ed ebrei", *Civiltà Cattolica* 136 (1985), 5-6

5 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Anti-Semitism", 99

and Christological position that rejects Jesus and the claims made for him by his followers. The expression "the Jews" does not represent a race.⁶

Sadly, many of the New Testament references to the Jews have been misinterpreted and distorted in support of anti-Semitism during the subsequent centuries.

3. Patristic Period

In the writings of some of the Church Fathers one finds explicit anti-Jewish attitude. Many of them attributed the guilt of the death of Jesus upon the entire Jewish race. To the Jews as a people was attributed the responsibility of Jesus' passion and death. The main issue for the Fathers of the Church was that Jewish people had committed "the greatest crime" of murdering the Son of God. St. Ambrose accused the Jews of patricide. With St. Cyril of Alexandria, who spoke of the Jews as killers of the Lord (*Kyrioktoni*) originated the accusation of "deicide"⁷.

Here also one observation is to be made. According to the Fathers of the Church, the entire people of Israel were responsible for Jesus' death, but not in the sense that all the Jews were directly responsible for the crucifixion, rather in the sense that the descendants of those who killed Jesus, in their persistent infidelity to and refusal of accepting Christ and in their persecution of Christ's followers, continued to participate in the sin of their fathers. The anti-Jewish polemics of the Church Fathers, which was very vehement in the writings of some of them like John Chrysostom remained on the level of theology and religion and had the intention of mainly keeping the Judeo-Christians on guard from observing Jewish practices⁸.

It was with the making of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire that anti-Judaism moved from theological and doctrinal level to political and legislative planes. Since the Jews were reckoned adversaries of Christians, they became enemies of the Empire. From

6 F. J. Maloney. *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1988), 11.

7 *Patrologia Graeca* 33.695.

8 See *Editoriale*, "Problemi e prospettive," 6-7.

this premise there began to appear legislations oppressive and discriminatory towards the Jews.⁹ There began to appear laws restricting the Jews from construction of synagogues and Sabbath worship and barring them from public office. "Direct action by the Church took the form of canonical legislation of the councils, principally those of Elvira, Nicaea, Vannes, and Orleans, which as a whole forbade the mingling of the Jews and Christians, separated the Easter celebration from the Jewish calendar, and prohibited participation in Jewish banquets."¹⁰

4. The Medieval Period

From the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D. till the 12th century the Jews enjoyed relative peace. But starting from 11th century virulent anti-Judaism began to show its ugly head, and it continued all through the medieval period until the Enlightenment and French Revolution.

The medieval animosity towards the Jews was rooted in partly theological and partly economic motives. Theological motives were not different from the patristic portrayal of the Jews as Christ-killers. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, so long as the Jews refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, the Jews of every generation is equally responsible for Jesus' death as those of Jesus' time. It makes no difference between the Jews of his time and those of Jesus' time. Even though they did not know that they were executing the son of God, they became culpable, because their ignorance was deliberate. However, the guilt of the *maiores* (High Priest and High Council) was greater than that of the ordinary people. Though there was a minority who differed from St. Thomas, the majority of theologians followed his views.¹¹

The fact that the Jews formed a group ethnically and religiously made them closed to any possibility of assimilation and integration into the Christian majority. They were "different" and remained so

9 See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 99.

10 E. H. Flannery, "Anti-Semitism," in *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 634.

11 W. P. Eckert, "Antisemitismus: V. Mittelalter", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 137-138.

always without any integration with the society where they lived and consequently they were attacked for their "strange" customs and their religious practices.

On the economic front, the Jews practised the lending of money on interest, a practice forbidden to Christians under death penalty. Since the Jews were unable to practise many professions except commerce, they possessed a lot of money, which they lent on interest. As a result they were portrayed as greedy usurers, who exploited the Christians. As a result, the Jew and the usurer became synonymous in the medieval period, an identification laden with grave consequences for all the Jewry.

The Crusades in their obsession to exterminate "the infidel at home", i.e., the Jews, opened the way to the massacre of the Jews in various parts of Europe.¹²

Calumnious accusations also were spread against the Jews to flare up the already existent anti-Jewish popular sentiments. Various stories were coined to caricature the Jews as conspirators against Christianity. For example, in the 14th century there arose a popular belief that the wells were being poisoned by the Jews, which often led to the killing of the Jews especially during the epidemic known as Black Death in 1348.¹³

Another false accusation levelled against the Jews was that of profanation of the Sacred Host, which rendered an excuse to harass and at times even to murder them.¹⁴

Nor did the reformation bring about any notable difference in the attitude towards the Jews. Martin Luther's remarks on the Jews were mostly negative¹⁵. On the Catholic front, from the second half of the 16th century ghettos were established first in Italy and then in the Austrian Empire. Ghettos were intended to segregate the Jews from others and to restrict their freedom of movement and served as a convenient additional demonstration of the error of Judaism.¹⁶

12 See Flannery, "Anti-Semitism," 634. 13 Flannery, "Anti-Semitism," 635.

14 Eckert, "Antisemitismus: V. Mittelalter", 141-142.

15 Eckert, "Antisemitismus: V. Mittelalter", 147-149.

16 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 108.

In the 17th century and most of the 18th century too the hatred towards the Jews was not racially based, rather motivated by theological and economic reasons¹⁷.

5. Modern Period

With the Enlightenment there occurred a change in the attitude towards the Jews. On the one hand its ideology became beneficial in emancipating the Jews in some European states. On the other hand, the suggestion of some of the thinkers of Enlightenment that the Jews were enemies of modern secular states transferred the anti-Jewish sentiment from religious and economical strata to more dangerous and vulnerable realms, namely nationalism and racism. If the anti-Jewish propaganda were hitherto based mainly on the theological and economic reasons, by the 19th century they assumed racial and political colour. As *Encyclopaedia Judaica* summarises:

The fact remains that, for all their resistance to racism and other delusions, some of the leaders of the Enlightenment played a central role in the development of anti-Semitic ideology. By declaring the Jew an enemy of the modern secular state, they refurbished the anti-Semitism of the Middle Ages and set it on an entirely new path.¹⁸

The racist theory proposed by Arthur Graf Gobineau (1816-1882) that the Arian race is superior to non-Arian races provided the feeding material to the demarcation of the Jews as belonging to the Semitic race, which is non-Arian, and place them in contra-position to the Arian race. By the end of the 19th century, "Semitism" became almost a definition for the ethnic designation of the Jews¹⁹. The modern anti-Semitism, which culminated in the Nazi anti-Semitism, is the immediate sequel of these nationalistic and racial theories together with economic factors rather than theological reasons.

Nonetheless, the presentation of the Jews as Christ killers and as a people rejected by God, an idea that sprouted to counter the anti-

17 G. Müller, "Antisemitismus: VI. Mittelalter," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 143.

18 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 112.

19 E. Weinzierl, "Antisemitismus: VII. Mittelalter", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 158.

Christian remarks of Jewish Rabbis in the early centuries of the Christian era, and then perpetuated down through the centuries by Christian theologians and popular devotions, also corroborated the modern anti-Semitism to have had such an edge in succeeding to send so many the Jews into concentration camps and gas chambers. In this sense, Christianity can be held indirectly responsible for it as well.

Thus after the Second World War there began in the theological circles a reflection on Judaism which within a short time would bring a great change as regards the rapport between the Jews and Christians. Various initiatives started to take place to counter the reappearance of anti-Semitism among Christians. The first among such initiatives was the document consisted of "the ten points of Seelberg". This document recommended the Churches and the Christians to insist on the following points in order to safeguard them from anti-Semitism:

1. To remember that it is the same living God who speaks to all both in the Old Testament and the New.
2. To remember that Jesus was born of Jewish mother, of Davidic lineage and of the people of Israel, and that his eternal love and his pardon embrace his people and the entire world.
3. To remember that the first disciples, the apostles and the first martyrs were the Jews.
4. To remember that the fundamental Christian precept of love of God and neighbour obliges Christians and the Jews in every human relationship without exception.
5. To avoid befuddling biblical and post biblical Hebrew religion with the intention to exalt Christianity.
6. To avoid the term "the Jews" in the exclusive sense of "enemies of Jesus" or use the notion "enemies of Jesus" to designate the Hebrew people as a whole.
7. To avoid using the passion in a manner as to incite hatred for the death inflicted on Jesus fall on all the Jews or only on the Jews ...
8. To avoid referring to the maledictions of the Scripture and the cry

of the excited mob: "that his blood fall on us and on our children", without remembering that, that cry would not prevail on the more powerful prayer of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."

9. To avoid giving credit to the general opinion that the Jews are cursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering
10. To avoid speaking of the Jews as if they were not the first to belong to the Church.²⁰

6. Vatican II and the Jewish Question

Of the various personalities among the Christians, who took pioneering steps to eradicate anti-Semitism from among the Christians, the most prominent figure in the Catholic world was Augustine Cardinal Bea, who in his capacity as president of the Secretariat for the Unity of Christians, played a decisive role in finalising the Conciliar Document *Nostra Aetate*, especially § 4 and 5, which deal specifically with the Jewish people.

However, the first place should go to Pope John XXIII as the one who provided the basic impetus to include the Jewish question in the Council's agenda as such. According to R. Neudecker, a decisive impulse toward a Conciliar Declaration on the Church and the Jewish people came from Pope John XXIII, who as Nuncio in Bulgaria and Turkey during the period of Nazi terrorism saved thousands of Jews from deportation. As pope, he saw the words *perfides* and *perfida Judaica* removed from liturgical prayers of Good Friday, and he also had a negative sounding passage in the consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus suppressed. He appointed Cardinal Bea to prepare a document of the relation of Christians with the Jews.²¹

6.1. A Short History of Formation of *Nostra Aetate*

Nostra Aetate had undergone a long and enduring process before

- 20 Giovanni Cereti-Lea Sestieri (eds.), *Le Chiese cristiane e l'ebraismo, 1947-1982*. Collection of Documents (Casale Monferrato 1983), 2-3 as quoted in *Editoriale*, "Problemi e prospettive," 10-11 (my translation).
- 21 R. Neudecker, "The Catholic Church and the Jewish People", in *Vatican II. Assessment and Perspectives* (ed. R. Lactourelle, New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 283.

it got ratified in the last session of the Council in October 1965. Even though the basic text of the Church's relationship with the Jewish people was already prepared in 1962 and was about to be discussed in the Central Preparatory Commission (henceforth CPC) of the Council, due to the Arab protest at the apparent special treatment given to the Jews and to Israel, the Secretariat of State withdrew the text from CPC's agenda. It meant that the text on the Jews should not be submitted to the Council²². But on Cardinal Bea's insistence, the subject was again taken into consideration and a modified version of the original text was inserted into the schema on the Decree on Ecumenism (*De Oecumenismo*) as its fourth chapter²³.

In his presentation of the text on the Jews on 19 November, 1963 Cardinal Bea substantiated the need to include the question. He reminded his audience of the anti-Semitism that had been widespread in various countries, especially Nazi Germany, and had contaminated Catholics. As the Church was endeavouring to renew itself in the Council, it had to face up to the question and show itself capable of imitating the charity of Christ and his apostles, who forgave their persecutors. To this end it was necessary to get rid of the prejudices inspired by false propaganda: the Jewish people of today cannot, nor this people in its entirety in the first century, be accused of responsibility for the death of Christ. The roots of anti-Semitism are indeed not only religious, but also political, psychological, social and economic. The important point is that Catholics must use the weapon of truth, charity and patience. However, chapters four and five of the schema on Ecumenism (*De Oecumenismo*) on the relations between Catholicism and the Jewish people and on religious freedom respectively were kept aside from voting. Instead it was decided on April 16, 1964 to separate these two chapters from *De Oecumenismo* and that they should become two independent "Declarations". The chapter on the Jewish question was further reworked in order to include also the

22 See G. Alberigo and J.A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.1 (Leuven: Peeters 2002), 270-271.

23 G. Alberigo and J.A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.3 (Leuven: Peeters 2002), 276.

question of other religions and would become "Declaration on the Jews and on non-Christians (*De Judaeis et de Non-Christianis*).

On 25 September 1964 Cardinal Bea presented his report on the draft of *De Judaeis et Non-Christianis*.²⁴ The question he insisted very much before the Council Fathers was that of deicide, "It would be an insult to call the Hebrew people a community of God killers", he said in the draft presented to the Council. "We do not negate, he explained, the guilt of the leaders of the people of Jerusalem, whatever it could have been – but we deny totally that it could be imputed to the people as a whole". But, in spite of the majority of the Council Fathers' strong support for Bea's position, due to "the delaying manoeuvres of a minority"²⁵ in the Curia, the declaration *De Judaeis* still remained without being considered for voting. After the discussion on this session, the schema on the Jewish question was again reworked to make suitable corrections to the text, especially to omit the expression "deicide people", and to avoid the special mention of anti-Semitism, both being the major contentious issues that threatened the very survival of the declaration. But after year-long apprehensions and deliberations, the final draft of *Nostra Aetate* got through in the last and decisive voting on October 28, 1965 with 1763 votes in favour and only 250 negative votes and 10 abstentions.

As the above given analysis shows, the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, though had a very difficult and troubled development in the Council, became the first Church document that tried to set a positive tone regarding the relationship between Christians and the Jews. As Willebrands put it succinctly, "Never before has such a systematic, positive, comprehensive, careful and daring presentation of the Jews

24 Between April 16, 1964 and September 25, 1964 lot of correspondence took place between Cardinal Bea and the State Secretariat regarding the modifications to be made to the document presented an appendix to *De oecumenismo* before it would appear as *De Judaeis et de non-Christianis*. Even Pope Paul VI intervened in suggesting some corrections to the text proposed by Bea. But Bea insisted against many of the modifications proposed in view of mere softening the question on Jews. For details, see G. Alberigo and J.A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.4 (Leuven: Peeters 2002), 135-193.

25 see Alberigo and Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.4, 193.

and Judaism been made in the Church by a Pope or a Council.”²⁶ Commenting on *Nostra Aetate* Neudecker notes, “the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* § 4 had long and, for the most part, painful antecedents, extending from the time of the New Testament down to the horrors of Auschwitz.... The Declaration ... recalls in many ways the tragic bimillennial history of relations between Christians and the Jews and makes it seem almost miraculous that the Declaration ever appeared.”²⁷

Nostra Aetate condemns categorically and in clear terms anti-Semitism, “Indeed the Church reproves every form of persecution against whomsoever it may be directed.... She deplores all hatreds, persecution, displays of anti-Semitism levelled at any time or from any source against the Jews”. The same theme is again taken up in *Nostra Aetate* § 5. Anybody who maintains any sort of discrimination against people or any harassment of them on the basis of their race, colour, and condition in life or religion is acting against the Divine will. As Neudecker rightly points out, “An anti-Semite or anyone who refuses to act in a loving way toward certain persons, cannot call upon God who is the father of all. He has understood nothing of God, for ‘he who does not love does not know God’ ” (1 Jn 4:8).

Conclusion

The Second Vatican Council’s declaration on the Jews, especially the condemnation of anti-Semitism, was a milestone in the history of Jewish-Christian relationship. It became a corrective to the centuries-old wrong interpretation of the New Testament references to the Jews and the caricature of the Jews as Christ killers. However, there is still a long way to go in order to eradicate the anti-Semitic mentality which managed to penetrate deep into the religious, cultural, social, economic and political strata of the society, especially where Christianity have had the major influence. What Cardinal Willebrands,

26 Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, “Christians and Jews: A New Vision,” in *Vatican II by Those Who Were There* (ed. A. Stacpoole, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), 222.

27 Neudecker, “The Catholic Church,” 282-283.

one of the close associates of Cardinal Bea in preparing the text of *Nostra Aetate*, wrote in 1985 still remains valid:

Jewish-Christian relations are an unending affair, as are love and brotherhood, but also (regrettably) hatred and enmity. The main point is to change the fundamental orientation, from hatred to love, from enmity to brotherhood. It is not a question only of deploying documents, or of particular actions.... It is a question of people, men and women of flesh and blood. Still more, it is a question of hearts.²⁸

The process of rectifying the Christian hatred towards the Jewish people initiated by *Nostra Aetate* § 4 and 5 reached yet another important milestone when on 12 March 2000 Pope John Paul II asked publicly pardon for the sins committed by the Christians in the past millennia. Cardinal Edward Cassidy, raising the issue of the treatment of the Jews, said, "Christians will acknowledge the sins committed by not a few of their number against the people of the Covenant". After a moment of silent prayer, the Pope responded: "We are deeply saddened by the behaviour of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood." At the dawn of third millennium, all those who believe in Christ should commit themselves to eradicate from the society not only any trait of anti-Semitism, but also any form of hatred and violence in the name of cast, creed, colour or race.

Dharmaram College

Bangalore - 560 029

28 Willebrands, "Christians and Jews: A New Vision." 229-20.

Awful Memories of the Crusades

Sebastian Edathikkavil

Sebastian Edathikkavil taught History for some time at the U.C. College, Alwaye. At present he is doing Doctoral Research in History in Kannur University. He tells very briefly the story of the Crusades, the so-called 'Holy Wars' waged by the Western Christian nations and the Church authorities in the Middle Ages against the Muslim rulers who conquered the 'Holy Land' of Palestine. In the Crusades political and economic motives were, in fact, mingled with religious ones. The atrocities of the Crusaders were horrible. Most of the Crusades were a failure and it could only perpetuate the attitude of hatred, enmity and revenge on the part of Muslims towards Christians.

Introduction

"Peace, peace, peace, my sweet father, and no more war!" is the cry by which St. Catherine urged Pope Gregory XI to be a herald of peace among Christians and to put an end to the crusades.¹ The crusade that was launched at the end of the eleventh century was an unprecedented event in the history of the world Christian Movement. In the course of the eleventh century, Western Christian powers made campaigns against Islam and tried their best to establish their moral and political power there. Pisa, Normans of Southern Italy, the rising monarchies of Christian Spain and the French were the main western Christian powers. Recovery of Spain and Sicily from Muslim rule was the adopted policy of the papacy. When appeals were made by Constantinople and Jerusalem for protection against Turkish oppression, Urban II, a French pope who already had close links with the holy

war in the western Mediterranean called the council of Clermont in 1095 and proclaimed a great expedition for the relief of Jerusalem². This is known as the first crusade. Later it was misused. The movement collapsed because it lost its resonance among Christians.

'Crusades' owes its name to a whole epoch, for it affected every sphere of life. It is not easy to give a satisfactory definition of the term due to its various forms and influences. Crusades is the collective name given to the various holy wars that were fought with the aim of recovering the Holy Land from the Islamic domination or to defend Christendom from the attack both internal and external. 'Crusade' comes from the word *crucis*, which means cross. A crusader was one who had taken a vow to go on a mission (*votum crucis*); wearing of a cloth cross over one's shoulder was evidence of such a vow; failure to fulfill the vow entailed excommunication³. Since they adorned their garments usually on the right shoulder, with a cross, they were called crusaders⁴.

Those who took part in the crusades enjoyed spiritual and temporal privileges guaranteed by the popes. Holy places were indispensable to Christians. But they were expelled from the Holy Land by the Muslims. So freeing the Holy Land was held to be a legitimate aim. Later there were many other objectives for making the crusades, such as, defending Christendom menaced by the infidels or by heretics or again for defending the Roman Church, attacked by its enemies.

Indulgences

Essential spiritual privileges were included in 'Indulgence'. The concept can be explained this way. Western theologians believed that according to Mt 16:19, the Pope had ultimate authority to grant forgiveness for actual sins committed by Christians on earth. Popes exercised this authority to declare that anyone who undertook the arduous journey of a crusade would be released from punishment by

2 John Mc Manners, ed., *The Oxford History of Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University press, 1993), 214

3 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1981 ed. Vol. iv, Palatine

4 Ludwig Hertling, *A History of The Catholi Church*, (Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957), 257

God in afterlife for all sins that they had committed.⁵ Crusaders who had confessed their sins were freed of the penance that they had to perform either in this world or the next, even if they were prevented by death from actually going on crusade. There were other spiritual factors at work as well. Crusading was depicted as a means of taking up the cross and following Christ⁶. It makes the crusaders contemporary counterparts to confessors and martyrs of the Christian past.

The chief temporal privilege was the Church's protection of a crusader's property, by which the church excommunicated those who laid hands on lands so ensured. This privilege was extended to include a moratorium on payment of debts contracted by a crusader and on interest acquiring to such debts (*privilegium crucis*). Only ecclesiastical tribunals, moreover, could judge crusaders.⁷ The indulgence was won only if the crusader was well disposed. Crusaders were forbidden to carry the cross for motives of glory or lust of temporal gain (by Pope Urban II). Eugene III added the injunction to avoid luxury and ostentation. Spiritual scholars treated the participation in a crusade as a conversion of life.

The Background

The factors that affected the crusades are various. Even though wars were judged to be justified according to Christian principles, the idea of a crusade gave a new theological justification to the armed force. According to the popes of the period – Leo IX, Humbert, Gregory VII and Urban II – the secular realm cannot be separated from the sacred in a Christian society. Thus the spiritual power flowed through the Church from its hierarchy because Christ had bestowed it upon Peter and the apostles. Accordingly a war waged at the Pope's bidding acquired a sacred meaning.⁸

5 Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of World Christian Movement*, Vol. 1, (Bangalore: Theological Publication of India, 2004), 396

6 Mathew 16, 24-26; Luke 9, 23-25.

7 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1981 ed. Vol. iv, Palatine

8 Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of World Christian Movement*, Vol. 1, (Bangalore: Theological Publication of India, 2004). 395

The concentration and increase of power of the Muslim rulers especially the Turks, who had moved from Central Asia to the Mediterranean region were a threat to the Eastern Roman Empire. On the other hand, on the Christian side, the increasing importance of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the growing power and great cohesion of the peoples of the Christian west, the attempt to give visible expression to this sense of a community and development to the idea of a holy war against heretics and heathens.⁹

Reasons

The central cause of the crusade was the genuinely devout religious nature of medieval society. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church laid great importance on pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a means of securing forgiveness for post-baptismal sins. During the seventh century Muslims captured the Holy Land. But the Islamic Fatimid Caliphate permitted the movement of worship for centuries. But in the eleventh century a barbaric Islamic group called the Seljuk Turks from Asia Minor captured the land. They were completely unsympathetic to any pilgrimages by Christians. They smashed the Byzantines and seized the whole stretches of Antioch in 1071 at the battle of Manzikert. Being devout Muslims, they were opposed to pilgrims wandering over their land and started a policy of oppression and harassment towards the Christians. The Eastern Emperor Alexius I (1081-1118) appealed for help to Pope Urban II.

Now from the part of the Western Church, the response was positive. For centuries, Western Europe had played with the idea of a vast attack on Muslims to rescue the Holy Land. The conversion of Normans, the war-loving people in 911 was a turning point. They enjoyed nothing less than fierce fighting and conquered some territories of France, England and Southern Italy and they had been particularly effective in driving Muslims out from Sicily, Sardinia and Costica. The conversion of Hungary had shortened the distance through hostile territory by thousands of miles. The popes had hinted at the idea of a crusade before it was carried out. Pope Sylvester II and Pope Gregory

⁹ Helmut Roscher, "crusades" in *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 1991 ed. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Brill

VII actively planned crusades against Turks.¹⁰ Now when Eastern Emperor Alexius I appealed to the West in 1095 not to delay such a crusade any longer, the right time had come for the Crusade in its real sense.

Pope Urban II responded to the appeal with a sermon at Clermont in South France. The Pontiff found all Christians willing to listen. In 1095 he called upon them to take up arms and go on a crusade: The powerful words of the Pope Urban II are as follows:

From the confines of Jerusalem and from the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth... an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God ... has invaded the lands of those Christians and depopulated them by the sword, plundering and fire.¹¹

The pope proceeded to list the Turkish atrocities, namely, the desecration of Churches, the rape of Christian women, and the torture and murder of men. At the conclusion of his address, a shout rose from the crowd, '*Deus Vult! Deus Vult!*' (God wills it.) Thus Urban made '*Deus Vult*' the battle cry of the crusade and suggested that each warrior wear the sign of the cross upon his clothing. The response was overwhelming as the common folk willingly pledged themselves with knights and other soldiers to fight the crusade. In all there were eight major crusades with two minor ones, the people's crusade and the children's crusade.

The Beginning

The first waves of crusades were mostly bands of peasants led by smattering knights. One such rabble army formed in Speyer, whose target was the Jews whose communities had been increasing for sometime in the northern cities. Those who refused to receive immediate baptism were massacred. Another such band gathered in France around a monk known as Peter the Hermit. As per the reports of the period, about twenty thousand peasants took part in it, under

10 Robert A Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 125.

11 *The History of Christianity*, A Lions Hand Book, (England: Lions Publishing, 1977), 277

his leadership. These untrained peasants, armed mainly with household implements were no match for military forces composed of foot soldiers and cavalry. After a brief stay outside Constantinople, they marched on towards the Holy Land. Large number of them died on the way as victims of hunger and exposure, or at the hands of local population. Before the winter, Muslim armies in Asia Minor exterminated the entire crusade. Survivors were sold into slavery.

The First Crusade (1096-1099)

The first crusade is considered as the most successful of the campaigns into Holy Land. It had brought back Jerusalem and gave birth to some crusader states, Latin kingdoms in the East. A very good number of crusaders from various western countries met at Constantinople. Emperor Alexius was a little bit alarmed by them. It is because he never envisioned anything like this. He had extracted oaths of loyalty to him as emperor from the crusading Franks.¹² The crusaders moved to Niceaea and captured it from the Turks. The Baldwin of Boulogne, who had brought his family along with him attacked Edessa and established there the first Latin Kingdom of the East. The main body of crusaders marched onto Antioch and later to Jerusalem. They massacred all the Muslim inhabitants in the city and burned the synagogues where Jews had taken refuge. These are the examples of terror inflicted in the name of religion by Christians. The original religious goals gave way to material gains.¹³ The original armies of knights were increasingly replaced by spiritual knightly orders charged to offer military perfection.¹⁴

12 This is the name given to the Latin Warriors by Byzantines and Muslims

13 For example, Godfrey of Bouillon as the ruler of Jerusalem took the title "*defender of the Holy Sepulchre*;" but his successor Baldwin made himself as the "*king of Jerusalem*".

14 The prominent groups of the knight orders were the Order of Hospitaller Knights of St. John and Order of Knights of Templars (1019) Ref. Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of World Christian Movement*, Vol. 1, (Bangalore: Theological Publication of India, 2004), 398

Second Crusade (1147-1149)

The news of capture of Edessa by Turks (1144) caused to organize a second crusade. It was during the period of Pope Eugene III. In response to the appeal of Bernard of Clairvaux, King Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany took the leadership of the attack. This campaign was an absolute disaster, as Conrad was virtually destroyed by the Turks at the battle of Dorylaeum. Later King Louis also had to face humiliating defeat by the Muslims. It was further weakened by the internal quarrels in the Holy Land itself. Jerusalem again fell into the hands of Muslims under the leadership of Saladin.

Third Crusade (1189-1192)

Pope George VIII issued an appeal for a third Crusade upon hearing the news of the fall of Jerusalem. The military leaders who responded to this appeal by taking the vow of the Cross were Emperor Frederic Barbarossa of the East, King Richard of England and King Philip of France. Emperor Frederic was marching forward to Jerusalem triumphantly but alas! on the eve of the proposed attack he drowned in the River Goeksu, where he went for a swim. King Richard along with King Philip could recapture Acre and several coastal sites but not Jerusalem. They could manage to come to a settlement permitting pilgrims to enter Jerusalem.

Fourth Crusade (1202-1204)

Dissatisfied with the settlement, Pope Innocent III decided to call a fourth crusade. The Crusade group started its journey by sea. At Venice, where they decided to embark the ships, they could not pay the promised sum to the ship owners. They were compelled to help the Venetians to capture the city of Zara from the king of Hungary against the prohibition of Pope as to discharge their debt. At Zara, they promised to help the son of the deposed Emperor Isaac II, who promised to join the crusade, to overthrow the imperial government at Constantinople. The crusaders after arriving at Constantinople, removed Emperor Alexios III in favour of young Alexios, which caused great dislike among the public. He proved very weak and on April 13, 1204, the city was taken over by the crusaders. They established a latin empire of Constantinople, a black mark in the history

of Catholicism. Latin rite was forced upon the Byzantine population and the regime earned undying hatred of the Greeks.

Children's Crusade (1212)

The fourth crusade brought much hatred and indifference to further crusading movement. Then the call began among children to march to Jerusalem and reclaim it in God's name. Though a foolish enterprise, it was supported by the youths from all over Western Europe. In 1212, they set out, much like the people's crusade before them, and soon found the road filled with misery and death. The children died from disease, slaughter and starvation. The Turkish captors sold most of the survivors into slavery. The chief rulers of Christendom were humiliated.

Fifth Crusade (1218-1221)

Upon hearing the news that Muslims had built on Mount Tabor a fortress, that threatened Acre, Pope Innocent III decided to launch a fifth crusade, which was carried out by his successor, Honorius III. In the absence of the anticipated help of Emperor Frederic II, King John of Brienne supported by a small papal army and the newly constituted Teutonic knights were forced to handle most of the fighting. Cardinal Pelegius, the papal delegate, was very particular to prove that the higher authority of the pope lies with him. He ordered an advance onto Cairo against the wish of the king. This resulted in defeat and the army escaped captivity only by handing Damietta back to the Muslims (1221).

Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)

Having incurred enormous displeasure from the popes for his inactivity in the fifth crusade, Emperor Frederic II sailed to Holy Land as to lead the sixth crusade. As he embarked in 1227, he was compelled to return to his country due to ill health. Hearing of this further delay, Pope Gregory IX excommunicated the Emperor. When the emperor was again on the march, the Latin states were not ready to support him and many crusaders returned to the West because of the ban on the emperor. Ignoring all this, Emperor Frederic II started negotiations with Muslims and secured for Christians control of

Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth through excellent discussions. On February 18, 1229, he crowned himself as the King of Jerusalem. But after his departure there rose a great quarrel between the crusaders and, Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Muslims in 1244.

Seventh Crusade (1248-1254)

Pope Innocent IV called upon a crusade when Jerusalem again fell into the hands of Muslims. In this seventh crusade, King Louis IX of France took the leadership. He concentrated on Egypt and the possession of Damietta (1249). The scene was suddenly changed. He was defeated in Mansura. His army was struck by an epidemic and fell easy prey to the Muslims. The king himself was captured. He had to pay a huge amount as ransom for the release of the soldiers and had to surrender Damietta to the Muslims in return for his liberty. Thus the crusade ended in a failure. The king remained there for four more years, strengthening its defences.

Eighth Crusade (1270)

The great Muslim leader Sultan Baybars began the reconquest of the Latin states. Alarmed by this, King Louis IX of France set out for another crusade. This crusade proved to be the last of the major efforts to save the Christian presence in Palestine. This time instead of Egypt, King Louis chose Tunis to get the local assistance of Tunisian King. Unfortunately, he died there in siege along with his son, due to the epidemic that ravaged the camp. The timely intervention and courageous movement of Prince Edward of England bore some good fruit. He succeeded in making a new treaty with the Sultan.

Later due to the extremely critical situation in the Holy Land, Pope George X prepared a new crusade and requested the assistance of various Christian rulers. But it was a failure. Few crusaders who responded to the call of Nicholas IV were unable to save Acre, which fell in 1291. Over the next centuries a number of Popes beseeched the Christian powers of Europe to try again to rescue Jerusalem or to stop the advance of Muslim power.

Other Crusades of the 12th and 13th Centuries

The other expeditions in 12th and 13th centuries were given the

same privileges as the earlier ones. After 1120, Pope Callistus II granted the same indulgences to the knights who volunteered to defend Spanish Christians against the Muslims. The crusades were organised against heretics (in 1208, after the death of the Legate Peter of Castelnova, Innocent III appealed for a crusade against Albigensis), schismatics (When Latin empire of Constantinople was threatened by the Greeks a crusade was organised against them in 1237), and the enemies of the states of the Church (Crusade against the Markward of Anweiler, who sought to invade the Kingdom of Sicily, a vassal state of the Holy See, 1199).

The Popes, however, continued to use the weapon of crusade after the 13th century to defend the faith against heretics and to oppose those who were regarded as enemies of the Church. Thus crusading was not limited to the East or, even to the fight against the infidels, but it has gone beyond. The eastern crusades served as a model for expeditions endowed with similar privileges.¹⁵

Some Reflections on the Crusades

The crusades were unhappy events in the history of the Catholic Church. The Church is greatly aware of its mistakes today. Since the Second Vatican Council, she had initiated measures to bring about reconciliation in the areas of grave failures. Pope John Paul II was a champion of this movement. Once he said to the journalist, Jas Gasaronski: "At the end of this second millennium, we must make an examination of conscience: Where we are, where Christ has brought us, where we have deviated from Gospel."¹⁶ This examination of conscience led the Holy Father to confess *mea culpa* for the Catholic Church on March 12, 2000. Prominent among the confessed public sins of the Christian communities of the past and present was the crusades.

Crusades were movements that were carried out in the name of the gospel. Crusades were always referred to religious wars that were fought in the Holy land in the name of religion. Despite its eventual failure, it had great influence on the destiny of Europe and of

15 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1981 ed. Vol. iv, Palatine

16 Accattoli Luigi, *When a Pope asks Forgiveness*, Trans., Aumann Jordan OP, (St. Pauls Publication, Newyork-1998), xviii

the Church. The main byproduct of Crusades was Christendom, which had replaced the idea of emperor and empire. Earlier emperors had been protectors of the Church and they interfered in the affairs of the church. But in the new arrangement, Pope became the leader and custodian of Christendom. Christendom was a community of Christians and kingdoms engaged in ventures against enemies according to the demands of the popes.

Again Crusades succeeded in greatly increasing and extending the papal authority throughout the West. The crusaders had responded to the call to take up arms issued by the pope. The vows they took were oaths made to his cause. If anyone who took the vows did not fulfill them, he was threatened with excommunication by Rome. It was a frightening prospect for the twelfth century Christians. Many became a prey to it. Papal indulgences greatly extended his influence over the personal spiritual life, for, he was able to grant forgiveness through institutional means at great distance.

The crusades had familiarized Westerners with certain ways of life, culture and, above all, with the products of the East. The Italian merchants and traders moved to the East and established business centers there. It was only an after-effect of the crusade and not its cause.

A Different Perspective

The crusade has brought a lot of hatred of the people of the East from the very beginning. The arrival of crusading troops at the capital of Byzantines for the first time itself was a great surprise and threat to them. They were afraid of attack by them. But actually it happened only later in the fourth crusade. The crusaders accused the Greeks of treason and sacked Constantinople, which was one of the cruelest events of the crusades. They plundered the city by carrying the treasures and relics and sent the emperor and the Patriarch fleeing. The establishment of Western empire in Constantinople and the enthronement of a Western Patriarchate in the East inflicted grievous injuries in the hearts of the Greek Church. The crusaders, who came to support and strengthen the Eastern Church in the name of God, had plundered and further weakened it.

The criticism against the crusade was sharp from the very beginning. The crusaders were charged with having shed innocent

blood and with having inflicted severe trails on Christians. The crusades deflected the crusaders from their duties to their own families and subjects. It has compelled the crusaders to find out the means for the operations. The great majority of them sold their properties and went into debt in order to finance their expedition. The groups were very poorly cared, improperly trained and were easily exposed to death. The greed of the Church was a hot subject of criticism – which is revealed in levying taxes and redemption of crusader vows. The institution of taxes on the clergy gave a permanent character to crusade. The church had deviated from its single aim of liberation of the Holy Land.

The Crusaders had thought that they were the liberators of Christians and Muslims, whose land they were invading. But the truth was the other way round. The indigenous inhabitants of Palestine and Syria – Muslims and Christians alike – generally looked down upon the Westerners. Many of the practices of the Franks were barbaric for them. The Western medical practices and life-style were inferior to theirs. Many of the habits and manners were not acceptable to Eastern people.

The Crusades had aroused an attitude of revenge and enmity in Muslims towards Christians, which had a lasting effect. Earlier, Muslim princes did not try to convert the infidels by force. But the presence and the activities of the crusaders shocked the fundamentals of Islam. They formulated a rival doctrine of *al-jihad* (holy war).¹⁷ They started persecutions against the native Christians in Muslim countries, which has its repercussions even today. Jihad is almost a common term for military expedition in the name of religion. It has an equal standing of 'holy war' along the lines of the crusades.

The leaders and the intellectuals of Islamic world continue to blame the popes for 'armed pilgrimages'. They were stiff and formal to any

17 In Arabic the word jihad meant "stiefe". In Quraan it was used to describe efforts to extend the dar al Islam (house of Islam). Although this could mean through warfare or political domination, jihad meant more generally convincing others the truth of Islam and stiefe against evil practices. Ref. Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of World Christian Movement*, Vol. 1. (Bangalore: Theological Publication of India, 2004), 403

attempt of the Church for a compromise dialogue. Muslim leaders recalled the crusades when they refused to meet Pope John Paul II in Nigeria in February 1982 and in Kenya in September 1995. The Arabian conservative Muslims branded the African Synod held in Rome (1994) as 'crusades against Islam'.

Towards New Horizons

Actually the question of crusades is small and academic, if we place it against the much larger question of relationship between Muslims and Christians. The Catholic Church wanted to revise the past and correct its acts. Pope John Paul II expressed this desire in *Ad Gentes*. The remarks made in the *Catechism for Adults* published by the Italian Conference of Bishops is noteworthy: "Today the secularized, individualistic and consumer-oriented culture of the West is penetrating the Islamic world and corroding it from within, thus provoking the reactions of Muslim fundamentalism, which involves an aversion to Christianity" (*Catechismo Degli Adulti*).

Therefore, we need a new approach towards our non-Christian brethren, especially, Muslims. An understanding mind and listening heart is required in the inter-religious dialogue. The memories of crusades are unhealed wounds for many of the Muslims and Christians of the East. Pope John Paul II succeeded in handling these issues and having dialogue with them. He had a dialogue with Eastern Christian Churches on this point and visited Athens in 2001, where he confessed *mea culpa* for the Church. As a result the relation between the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church has greatly improved. Recently Greek Orthodox Patriarch Mar Christodoulos agreed to visit Pope Benedict XVI. Regarding the Muslims, the words of Kaled Follad Allam, a Muslim intellectual, who participated in the inter-religious meeting at Assisi in 1986, is noteworthy. He said: "The invitation of Pope to a patient, firm but respectful dialogue among religions is objectively a change of perspective, regarding the crusades. His is a perspective which, I, a non-Christian, judge to be genuinely evangelical."¹⁸

18 Accattoli Luigi, *When a Pope asks Forgiveness*, Trans., Aumann Jordan OP, (St. Pauls Publication, Newyork-1998), 85

What we need today is such respectable dialogues with our wounded brethren. For this, we have to work together and pray unceasingly through the intercession of Pope John Paul II, the apostle of genuine evangelical dialogue and life.

Dharmaram College
Bangalore - 560 029

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Understanding the Inquisition

Thomas Anchukandam

Thomas Anchukandam is the Rector and Professor of Church History at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore. He introduces here very briefly the sin of 'Inquisition' confessed by Pope John Paul II. 'Inquisition' was a Christian institution of the Middle Ages to bring to trial all the heretics in the Church and punish those who were found guilty. The author presents the outlines of the history of the inquisition, its medieval set-up and background and its ring-leaders as well as a few prominent cases of victims.

The Inquisition refers to an institution in the Catholic Church whose origins go back to the 12th century and which, with modifications, continued to the year 1965, when Pope Paul VI replaced it with the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith. Having its origin in the Latin word *inquirere*, meaning *to seek/search for*, it stood for the defense of the Catholic Church and her doctrines through a systematic search for heretics in order to bring them to trial and worthy punishment. Criticized, challenged and opposed throughout the many centuries of its existence, especially on account of its many excesses, the institution of the Inquisition, especially on account of the frequent references made to it by critics, had become a source of great embarrassment to the Catholic Church. Hence, when on 12th March 2000, Pope John Paul II, in a historic gesture asked pardon for the Church's past sins of omission and commission, the reference to the excesses of the Inquisition were evident in at least two of the sins mentioned; viz., sins committed in the service of the Truth (sin no.2) and sins against the fundamental rights of the person (sin no.7). The present article is an attempt to understand the much maligned institution of the Inquisition

from a historical perspective and thus to have a better perception of the Church's desire to come to terms with those unsavory events of her past regarding it.

1. The Inquisitorial Mentality

The origins of the inquisition should be traced back to the primitive desire of every society to protect itself from forces that threaten to destabilize it from within. The Book of Deuteronomy had established the inquisitorial process complete with the death penalty. "If there is found among you, in one of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, and transgresses his covenant by going to serve other gods and worshipping them – whether the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden – and if it is reported to you or you hear of it, and you make a thorough *inquiry*, and the charge is proved true that such an abhorrent thing has occurred in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or that woman who has committed this crime and you shall stone the man or woman to death. On the evidence of two or three witnesses the death sentence shall be executed; a person must not be put to death on the evidence of only one witness." (Deut. 17:2-6).

In the New Testament times, the Jewish society tried to suppress the nascent Christian communities considering them a threat to Judaism founded on the Mosaic Law. A generally tolerant Roman Empire began a systematic persecution of the Christians considering them *as being adherents of a new superstition* which could prove a danger to the stability and tranquility of the Empire. Early Church, considering heretics to be potential subverters of society, used excommunication and exile to reign in those who propagated deviant doctrines. Church of the Middle Ages, when anthropomorphic conception of society – with the state and the Church being considered the secular and spiritual arms of society – demanded close collaboration between the secular and spiritual arms, took repressive measures with regard to those who were considered threats to the stability and tranquillity of the established social order. The Inquisition, which is the subject of our study was an institution meant to serve the purpose of preserving the State and the Church from insidious beliefs and ideologies which could derail the society and confuse the faithful.

However, with the passage of time, the Inquisition which called for close collaboration between the Church and the State, was influenced by political, religious and monetary interests and spawned the strange blend of zealous faith and strong measures of coercion on heretics and dissidents which brought these into great disrepute and became a source of embarrassment to the Catholic Church.

2. Areas influenced by the Inquisition

The Inquisition as an institution was far more prevalent in the countries of southern Europe like Italy, France, Spain and Portugal as well as in the Spanish and the Portuguese colonies. Though Northern Europe would to a large extent be free of the influence of the Inquisition as an institution, inquisitorial methods – including burning at the stake – were resorted by Protestant reformers in order to safeguard the purity of the faith.

The most notorious of the inquisitions was the Spanish Inquisition, established by Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. In 1478, they requested Pope Sixtus IV to set up an inquisitorial tribunal in Spain in order to deal with relapsed *conversos* or Jewish converts to the Catholic faith. In due course the Spanish authorities set up inquisitorial tribunals also in colonial centres like Mexico, Lima, Cartagena and Manila.

Between 1534 and 1540 an Inquisition similar to that of Spain was established in Portugal. In 1561, the Portuguese Inquisition established a tribunal also in Goa.

The Roman Inquisition was set up in 1542 by Pope Paul III. This was meant primarily for the Papal States and other parts of Italy, though it claimed powers over all of Europe. In 1588 it was renamed the *Congregation of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition* or *the Holy Office*.

The Portuguese Inquisition was suppressed in 1821 and the Spanish Inquisition in 1834. Pope Paul VI suppressed the Holy Office in 1965 and replaced it with the *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith*.

3. The Context of the Evolution of the Inquisition

Medieval Inquisition has to be understood in the context of the

radical preachers who propagated an anti-ecclesiastical and anti-sacramental ideology. In the first half of the twelfth century, this group included Peter of Bruys (Southern France referred to then as the Midi), Tanchelin (Flanders), Henry of Lausanne (Lausanne, Pisa, Poitiers, Bordeaux and Albi), Eude de l'Étoile (Britanny) and Arnold of Brescia. Inspired by them, their adherents desecrated church buildings, destroyed altars, burnt crosses and beat up priests. But enthusiastic though they were, these groups were not well organized and tended to disappear with the demise or disappearance of their leaders.

Heresy became a mass movement with a strong organization with the appearance of the Cathari from 1140. They held as doctrine a dualism of the Manichaeian kind. The Cathari denied the Trinity, rejected the Incarnation and the resurrection of the body and revived many of the early heresies like gnosticism, monarchianism, docetism and Manichaeism.¹ Their rejection of the institution of marriage was considered to be a threat not only to the Church, but also to society at large.

Around the year 1175, Peter Waldo, a merchant from Lyons, gave rise to a movement of reform within the Church called Waldensianism. He and his followers preached apostolic poverty and the imitation of Christ and initially were lauded by Pope Alexander III himself at the Third Lateran Council.² But when the hierarchy did not accede to his demands for freedom to preach on doctrinal issues, Waldo joined hands with the Cathari to pose a strong challenge to the Catholic Church. The Waldensians rejected the Church's teaching authority and began to denounce the hierarchy, tradition, Sacraments, and the veneration of saints, images and relics. They proved also to be not in favour of indulgences, oaths, tithes, military service and death penalty. The popularity of these movements, drawn mainly from their strict moral conduct oriented to the Gospel, made the hierarchical Church fear that these movements would soon turn into a flood capable of shaking

1 Hans Georg Beck, Karl August Fink et al. *From the High Middle Ages to the Eve of the Reformation*, Burns & Oates, London 1980, pp.99-100.

2 *Ibid.*, 101.

the very foundations of the Universal Church. Spontaneous and violent reactions on the part of the faithful were also verified in northern France and the Rhineland where heretics were done to death.³

4. Evolution of the Idea of the Inquisition

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, that towering personality who so dominated Europe in the first half of the 12th century, had in the beginning advocated better instruction, warning and excommunication of the heretics. Later faced with the intransigence of the heretics he came around to the idea that if canonical penalties did not suffice, the secular power should be asked to proceed against heretics. Faced with the spectre of the dissolution of Church and Society, the Popes soon began to legislate in the matter calling also for the collaboration of the secular powers.

4.1. *Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) and the Beginning of the Inquisition*

Alexander III took a very strong stand against the Cathari as can be seen from the decrees of the Synods of Montpellier (1162) and Tours (1163), which synods, it must be pointed out, had sketched the Inquisition in principle.

The Pope called for the active intervention in matters of heresy in view of the danger to the purity of the Church's faith and the unity of her organization. Bishops and priests had the duty *to inquire* into the life and activities of heretics, obtain information on the existence and type of their gatherings and to proceed against them with canonical penalties. In keeping with the spirit of these synods, Alexander invited the clergy, magistrates and all orthodox citizens to point out heretics. Those thus pointed out were excommunicated and imprisoned, their property confiscated, their castles destroyed.

At the Third Lateran Council (1179), after describing the precarious situation in the heresy affected regions of Europe, Canon 27 of the Council, admonished the princes to carry out the Church's instructions, and finally called for a crusade against the heretics. What is significant in this Council was the cooperation demanded of the secular princes

3 Ibid., p.100.

and the ecclesiastical powers in suppressing heresy by means proper to them.

The rationale of the Pope emphasizing the close collaboration between the State and the Church in stamping out heresy was the view that heresy was a serious threat on the dogmatic and social structure of the Church and an attack on the public welfare – the *bonum commune* of both the Church and the State. In the common defense against such an attack, the secular power was to be subordinated and dependent on the spiritual power for direction and was to act as the executor of its judgements.

4.2. Pope Lucius III (1181-1185)

At Verona in 1184, Pope Lucius, in the presence of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, took up the decisions of the Council of Tours (1163) and made them universally binding through his bull *Ad abolendam*. According to this, the bishop, as the ordinary judge in questions of heresy, was to search out heretics in biennial visitations of his diocese in order to prosecute them on his own authority, without waiting for a formal accusation. Thus *inquisition proceedings* were to replace accusation proceedings or the formal accusation made by a third party.

4.3. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216)

Pope Innocent III confirmed the above directives of Lucius through the bull *Vergentis in senium* of 1199. Demanding their strict application by the secular powers, Innocent declared heresy to be *crimen maiestatis* - a crime against the king or the state. Later at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the above legislations were made laws of the Universal Church. The Council emphasized the lawfulness of investigations from parish to parish, demanded that processes be initiated *ex officio*, without awaiting charges, and required the confiscation of the goods and the handing over of the condemned to the secular power for punishment⁴. At this point of time one could say that the procedure of the Inquisition was essentially determined.

4 Norman P.Tanner, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. I (Nicea I – Lateran V) Sheed & Ward and George Town University Press, 1990, pp.233-235.

4.4. Pope Honorius III (1216 – 1227)

Pope Honorius III, who had intensified the crusade against the Albigensian heretics, influenced King Louis VIII of France to issue an ordinance of great significance for the development of the Inquisition. In April 1226, Louis declared that every heretic condemned by the Episcopal court was to be forthwith punished through the *animadversio debita* (death penalty). All the followers of the heretic and all abettors of the heresy were to be struck with the penalty of infamy. These provisions also became a part of the French royal law and the model for all future legislations on the question of heresy.

It was during the reign of Pope Honorius III that Emperor Frederick II legislated against the heretics in his own territories through an imperial edict. Heretics condemned by the Church were exiled and they and their heirs suffered confiscation of property. Referring back to the provisions of the Fourth Lateran Council, Frederick II decreed that persons suspected of heresy incurred infamy, excommunication, and, in the case of the obstinate, the same penalties as the heretics themselves. City authorities were obliged under oath to expel them and if the nobility were involved, their land and property were liable to seizure. Further, Frederick sent the edict to the University of Bologna, the renowned centre of legal studies, asking it to be inscribed in the University's register and proclaimed as the norm of instruction. In 1224, Frederick also introduced the penalty of burning the heretic. In a reply to an enquiry from Archbishop Albert of Magdeburg, who was acting as imperial legate in Romagna, he wrote:

Anyone who has been convicted of heresy by the bishop of his diocese must immediately, on the bishop's demand, be arrested by the secular judicial authority and delivered up to the pyre. Should the judges mercifully spare his life, he must at least suffer the loss of his tongue, by which the Catholic faith has been assailed.⁵

Consistent with his stand, when a few heretics were handed over to him by the municipal councils of Rimini and Macerata, he had them burned.

5 Quoted in Hans Georg Beck, Karl August Fink, et al., op. cit., p.212.

Though in the beginning neither the papacy nor the curia officially adopted such extreme measures, it must be admitted that the Church tacitly tolerated their implementation. In 1227, Honorius III went a step further. Acting as the arbiter between the feuding Lombard League and the Emperor, during the peace proclamation of 26th March, he insisted with the former that its members adopt the imperial order which provided death by fire for condemned heretics.

4.5. Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241)

Pope Gregory IX, energetically pursuing the policy of Honorius III, his predecessor, applied the provisions of the peace formula between the Emperor and the Lombard League as the guiding principle of his policy and imposed it on all the Italian cities. Through this act of Gregory IX, the Church officially recognized death at the stake as a penalty for heresy. Gregory also began expressly to give the task of inquisitor, which was thus far restricted to the local bishop, to religious, notably the Dominicans.

It was during Gregory's tenure that at the end of the Albigensian War in 1229, Louis IX, King of France, officially recognized and confirmed the collaboration of ecclesiastical and secular authorities in discovering and punishing heretics. A significant step towards the development of the legislation on heresy and hence of the Inquisition was taken by the Council of Toulouse that same year. This Council decreed the assembling of a permanent law court and a permanent college of judges with delegated Episcopal authority, whose task consisted solely in seeking out heretics and bringing them to trial. The importance given to the question of heresy at this Council may best be gauged from the fact that of the forty-five articles, twenty were concerned with the question of heretics!

Gregory also took other steps against the heretics which were to have a bearing on the final shape of the Inquisition. In January 1231, he included the burning by fire into his register and in February of that year, incorporated it into his own constitution titled *Excommunicamus*. This constitution forbade public and private discussions of faith among the laity, and ecclesiastical burial was denied to those put to death. Other components of this constitution included life-imprisonment for

the penitent heretics, prohibition of any appeal to other tribunals, denial of any legal assistance to the accused, and finally social ostracism of the descendants of the condemned – to the second generation they lost the ability to hold any ecclesiastical office. It also gave the secular arm a delay of eight days for the carrying out of the burning at the stake – *animadversio debita*, ordered the destruction of the immovable property, assigned one-third of the goods to those making the denunciation, and expelled from the city all followers of the condemned, confiscating one-third of their possessions. The Pope also made universally binding the wearing of the cross by the condemned, the secrecy of the trials and the withholding of the names of the witnesses, as well as the exhuming of the remains of the heretics who had gone undetected in life, in order to bring them to trial posthumously!

From 1232, Gregory IX turned the Inquisition over to the new orders, especially the Dominicans, who “with a downright scientific zeal for the faith built up an inescapable legal procedure in their special tribunal.”⁶ Textbooks and manuals for inquisitors appeared, describing the procedures and even the virtues demanded of an ideal inquisitor. Bernard Gui, a distinguished Dominican Inquisitor of Toulouse from 1307-1324, set forth qualities expected of the inquisitor in the following words:

He ought to be diligent and fervent in his zeal for religious truth, the salvation of souls and the extirpation of heresy. He should so conduct himself amid unpleasant and difficult affairs that he never loses control of himself in fits of temper or anger; nor on the other hand should he give way to debilitating sluggishness and languor, for such torpor saps the vigor of an administrator.

The Inquisitor must be constant, persevering amid dangers and adversaries even to death. He should be willing to suffer for the sake of justice, neither rashly precipitating danger nor shamefully retreating in fear, for such cowardice weakens moral stability. While remaining adamant to the entreaties and blandishments of sinners, nevertheless he must not so harden

6 Ibid., p.215.

his heart as to repel appeals to grant delays or to mitigate penances according as circumstances of place and time may suggest, for such procedure savours rather of cruelty. By the same token he should refrain from too lenient an attitude which degenerates into dissoluteness...

Let him be careful in doubtful cases not to believe too easily everything that appears probable, for such is not always true; nor on the other hand should he stubbornly refuse to believe what may seem improbable, for such is often true. With all diligence, therefore, he should discuss and examine every case and inquire into the truth of the matter.... So let mercy and truth, which should never be far from the mind of a judge, rule his actions and always shine from his face with the result that his judicial decisions never be marred by irregularity nor blemished by avarice or cruelty.⁷

4.6. *Innocent IV (1248-1254)*

It was during the reign of Pope Innocent IV that the Inquisition was made into an institution of canon law. He combined all the earlier papal and imperial enactments in the bull *Ad extirpanda* of 15th May 1252. Though he introduced the use of torture in the trial of suspected heretics, he did away with some of the more severe earlier provisions like the arrest of the relatives which had been introduced by Gregory IX.

5. The Inquisitorial Procedure

The actual judicial process underwent a number of modifications as a result of the various apostolic constitutions and papal interventions. What was novel with regard to the procedure was that this was a departure from the traditional form of accusation or of denunciation – when a formal accusation or denunciation was made before the tribunal. This procedure, which was the standard practice from the Roman times was found unsuitable in the case of heretics. According to the inquisitorial procedure, the judge could *ex officio*, bring a suit

7 John O'Brien, *The Inquisition*, MacMillan Publishing Co., New York 1973, p.11.

against any individual who might even vaguely be the object of public rumour. Once a suit was brought against him, he was obliged to take an oath to tell the truth.

The suspect did not know who had informed against him and was thus deprived of any opportunity to challenge and confront his accusers. This was obviously a precaution against reprisals from the relatives and friends of the suspect. Under the circumstances, the defendant's only recourse was to reveal the names of his principal enemies, as possible informers against him. Lawyers and clerks were not able to offer their services to the accused as they would then be themselves considered accomplices.

The suspect was questioned by the inquisitor or by one of his aides in the presence of at least two witnesses. He was given a summary statement of the charges against him. Refusal on his part to take an oath to tell everything he knew about the heresy was considered a presumption of guilt. The interrogation was recorded in Latin and when read to the defendant, it was translated into the vernacular for his benefit. If the suspect was found to evade the question, he could be imprisoned – simple detention or solitary confinement. The inquisitor would also use all means available to him – from acts of kindness to planting spies in prison to trap the accused. When an admission was not forthcoming from the suspect, proof of heresy was achieved by witnesses.

Following the bull *Ad extirpanda* of Innocent IV, torture was also used to force heretics to confess. At times excessive use of torture led even to Papal interventions on the side of the tortured.

6 Penalties

It is generally believed that the Inquisition did not inflict true punishment but rather salutary penances for the spiritual benefit of former heretics who, renouncing the heresy had returned to the faith. Since it could not impose sanctions against obstinate heretics, the practice of handing heretics over to the secular authority came into vogue.

The minor penalties imposed by the inquisitors on those who had abjured heresy could be listed as scourging, visits to churches,

pilgrimages, wearing the cross of infamy, imposed either separately or in combination.

Wearing of the cross – crosses of yellow cloth sewn on the outside of the clothing, front and back – was a severe penalty as it could expose the wearers to many humiliations in their daily life.

Imprisonment was the normal punishment for the converted heretic and his diet was “the bread of sorrow and the water of tribulation!” Sometimes solitary confinement would also be imposed in special cases, leading to great hazards for the health of the prisoners.

It was the bishop’s duty to provide prisons and to supervise the detention of prisoners – a job which they did with little enthusiasm on account of the expenses involved.

Death penalty was reserved for the obstinate heretic. But as the Church could not inflict it, the sentenced was surrendered to the secular arm which would then proceed to the execution. Death penalty, however, was something exceptional and not the rule as may be seen from the fact that in Toulouse, c. 1256, only one case of burning at the stake was recorded. During his long career as the inquisitor of Toulouse, Bernard Gui (1307-1324), surrendered only 40 heretics to the secular arm.

Those condemned to death or life imprisonment could also have their properties confiscated.

In matters of faith, even death could not prevent the heretic from being brought to justice. The inquisitors would either exhume the remains of the convicted heretic, or exhume and burn them.

7. Number of Victims

It is not possible to compile the exact list of the victims of the Inquisition. However, it is reasonable to assume that the numbers of those put to death have been grossly exaggerated. Agostino Borromeo, professor of Church History at the Sapienza University, Rome, who edited a 783-page volume of essays on the Inquisition is of the opinion that of Spain’s 125,000 heresy trials only about 1 percent of the defendants were condemned to death.⁸ But it can rightly be assumed

8 <http://mangans.blogspot.com/2004/06/inquisition> (internet) accessed on 7/15/06.

that from the time of its coming into existence – albeit in a rudimentary form during the time of Pope Alexander III - right up to the time of the abolition of the Roman Inquisition in 1965 under Pope Paul VI, it brought much pain and suffering to thousands of heretics, presumed heretics and their relatives and friends.

8. Some Prominent Cases

Though there have been hundreds of people who were tried by the Inquisition and punished either by that institution or handed over by it to the secular arm, some cases have agitated spirits for centuries. Four such cases are given below.

8.1. *Joan of Arc (1412-1431)*

When Joan was about 13, what she referred to as “voices” revealed her mission – the deliverance of the French Kingdom from the English, who in 1420, following the Treaty of Troyes had set aside the legitimate claims of the future French King, Charles VII, declared Henry V of England, King of France. However, the English, decided on tracking down and putting an end to Charles’ claims, laid siege to Orleans.

Leaving her home in January 1429, Joan presented herself to Charles VII at Chinon on 25th February 1429. Having satisfied himself about her divine mission, through an examination of her by theologians, Charles VII, reassembling an army, decided to follow her advice and chase the English out of France. With Joan at its head, the French army marched on Orleans and raised the siege. This was followed by her resounding victory at Patay on June 18. This victory opened the road to Reims, where Charles was crowned King of the French on 17th July 1429.

Though Joan wanted to carry on the campaign against the English and the Burgundians, their ally, with the intention of establishing more firmly the authority of Charles, he himself opposed her plans. When in 1430 she tried to relieve Campiègne, which was besieged by the Burgundians, she was taken prisoner and then sold to the English.

The English had her tried at Rouen, by Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who was a known supporter of the English. After a long period of interrogation (Feb.21-May 24, 1431), Cauchon tricked her into an admission of guilt and she was sentenced to death as a relapsed heretic. On 30th May, she was excommunicated, turned over to the

secular arm, and burned at the stake. She died protesting her innocence.

Though the Church would rehabilitate her after a 7-year trial (1449-56), the case of Joan of Arc is an instance of how the Inquisition was used for political and military ends.

8.2. *Michael Servetus (1511-1553)*

Born at Villanueva, Spain, in 1511, he studied law, theology and medicine. As early as 1531, Servetus attacked the doctrine of the Trinity in his work *De erroribus trinitatis*, claiming that it was not a question of there being three persons in God, but of three forces or manners of operation. He also entered into a lengthy correspondence with Calvin which laid bare the differences of beliefs between the two on so central an issue as the Trinity. Though the Inquisition of Lyons had him arrested, he escaped from prison. But he was condemned to death by burning *in absentia*. A fugitive, he reached Geneva, where he was accused before the city council by Nicholas de Fontaine, the secretary of John Calvin, arrested and tried.

The trial dragged on for weeks and was for all practical purposes a theological debate between Servetus and Calvin. On 26th October 1553, Servetus was declared guilty of heresy by the city council and condemned to death by burning. His books were also to be burnt. Although demanding the death penalty, Calvin desired to avoid his being consigned to the flames, suggesting decapitation instead. But his intervention proved fruitless, and in keeping with the practice of the period in dealing with heretics, he was burnt at the stake on 27th October 1553.

Melanchton, a close friend of Luther and a Protestant theologian of some repute in his own right, congratulated Calvin on the outcome of the issue.

I have read your essay in which you refuted the horrible blasphemies of Servetus and I thank the Son of God, who was judge in your struggle. The Church too is now and hereafter in your debt. I am in complete agreement and at the same time I acknowledge that your authority has acted rightly in condemning the blasphemer to death, after a legitimate trial.⁹

9 Quoted in Erwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik & Hubert Jedin, *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, Burns & Oates, London 1980, pp.382-83)

The trial and burning of Servetus on the initiative of the Protestant Reformers is indicative of the fact that they too were not averse to the use of the Inquisition in preserving the purity of the faith.

8.3. *Giordano Bruno (1548-1600)*

Giordano Bruno was a Dominican priest known for his vast knowledge of philosophy, theology and science. He was also well-versed in Latin and Italian letters. Led by an impetuous and intolerant love for knowledge, he was known for his imprudent and often violent criticism of every doctrinal profession not illumined by philosophical and personal knowledge, and his rejection of all authority other than reason itself. In some of his writings, notably *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*, *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, and *Asino cillenico*, Bruno made a clever use of symbols to criticize positive religions by citing superstitious aspects and advancing the idea of a purely rational interpretation of traditional teachings.¹⁰

The first ecclesiastical reaction to his independent spirit came from the Lutheran religious authorities who excommunicated him during his stay at Helmstädt. His end came, when, invited to Venice by the patrician Giovanni Mocenigo, he was betrayed by his host and was handed over to the Inquisition in 1592. Accused of heresy and imprisoned first in Venice and then in Rome, Giordano Bruno, who refused to retract his teachings, was burnt at the stake in Campo dei Fiori, Rome.

Feeling that he had been given a very raw deal by the Inquisition authorities, anti-clericals in Italy would consider him a symbol for movements against the Church and go on to build a monument in his honour at the site of his burning.

8.4. *Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)*

Nicholas Copernicus (+ 1543) had dedicated to Pope Paul III his *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, which sought to prove by mathematical arguments the motion of the earth around the sun, something which went against the commonly held view that the earth

10 Cf. A. Pupi, "Bruno, Giordano", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol.II, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1966, p.840.

was the centre of the universe. The new world-view did not meet with any hostility from the Church and after 1594 the University of Salamanca made the text of Copernicus the basis of instruction.

However, Protestant leaders like Luther, Melanchthon and Osiander as well as the University of Tübingen attacked the Copernican system as contradicting Scripture.

Galileo Galilei found confirmation of the Copernican system by observing the heavenly bodies. With the help of a telescope he constructed, he defended it against the objections drawn from Scripture (Josh. 10:12f; Ps. 103:5). Due to his erudition he was esteemed also in the ecclesiastical circles of Rome and was even admitted to the Papal Academy in 1611. But before long he was denounced by the Dominican preacher Lorini and tried by the Roman Inquisition. Galileo tried to defend himself vehemently by attempting to demonstrate the compatibility of his system with a correct interpretation of Scripture. But his attempts so provoked the consultors of the Inquisition that on 24th February 1616 it declared his propositions on the standing of the sun and the movement of the earth as heretical and forbade him to defend them in the future. He was neither asked to abjure his teachings nor was he required to cease his investigations. Pope Paul V had in fact granted him an audience and assured him his protection.

After the accession to the Papal throne of Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, a friend and admirer of Galileo, with the Papal title Urban VIII, Galileo, relying on the Pope's benevolence, published in 1632, his *Dialogues on the Two Great World Systems*. The Inquisition summoned him for having violated the prohibition of 1616, which had explicitly asked him not to defend his theory in the future. The Inquisition was not impressed even by the fact that the book in question had an imprimatur by Riccardi, Master of the Sacred Palace.

At his trial, though Galileo declared that he did not interiorly adhere to the Copernican system, he was condemned on 22nd June 1633 as being vehemently suspected of heresy. He was made to kneel and abjure the Copernican world-view, sentenced to imprisonment and given a salutary penance (to recite a certain number of psalms). However, the imprisonment was never imposed though he had to

remain in house detention on his own estate of Alcetri, near Florence, for the rest of his life. At his death on 8th January 1642, he was buried in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence. In 1773, the ecclesiastical authorities permitted a monument to be erected over his tomb.

Though Galileo did suffer at the hands of the Inquisition, especially on account of the personal hostility of powerful groups in Rome, it must also be pointed out that it was his attempts to resolve the apparent contradiction between his conclusions from the study of natural sciences and Scriptural revelation, that brought him into conflict with the Inquisition.¹¹ Yet his renown as a scientist and the esteem he enjoyed in the ecclesiastical circles, starting from the Pope, led to his being treated with some consideration and his punishment being mild.

Conclusion

The modern historian, John Lukacs, once observed that the purpose of history is the reduction of untruth."¹² This observation could with reason be applied to the popular understanding of the Inquisition.

The establishing of the Inquisition and its activity, the collaboration of ecclesiastical and secular power in the fight against heresy, the harshness of the procedure, and the cruelty of its penalties – none of this can be understood apart from the assumptions of the social order in the High Middle Ages. The bond unifying them was the faith which heresy threatened to destroy. With all the means provided by its ecclesiastical powers, the Church in collaboration with the secular authority waged a war to maintain itself against this threat. A better understanding demands a more refined but at the same time more generous judgment of the past – even in the case of so loath some an institution as the Inquisition.

Kristu Jyoti College

Bangalore - 560 036

11 Erwin Iserloh Joseph Glazik & Hubert Jedin, op.cit. ... p.643.

12 Quoted in E. Peters, "Inquisition" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition, vol.7, Gale, Washington 2003, p.491.

Remembering and Re-Membering

The Past, Present and Future of Women in the Church

Pushpa Joseph

The author is lecturer in the Department of Christian Studies, University of Madras. In this article she explores the liberating potentials of memory understood both as an act and praxis of remembering and restoring. The Church's public act of purification of memories, she argues, will lead to fruition only when and if accompanied by a simultaneous praxis that reaffirms women's well-being for the total emancipation of the human family. This calls for a radical transformation of some of the restrictive anthropologies on which is based the approach of the Church to women and a simultaneous reconstruction of new identities based on a relational understanding of the women/man self. Such an approach offers great dividends for the Church's praxis of liberation.

"The artificial memory as a part of rhetoric belongs into the rhetoric tradition; memory as a power of the soul belongs with theology."¹

"Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Those who do not remember their past are condemned to repeat their mistakes."²

"Women...in all ages and in all places, have danced on the earth, danced the life dance, danced joy, danced grief, danced despair, and danced hope, literally danced these and more...by their very lives."³

1 Francis A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974)389

2 George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Volume 1, 1905 Quoted from *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*.

3 Margaret Laurence, *Dance on the Earth: A Memoire*, (Toronto, Canada: McClelland & Stewart, 1989)37

Introduction

Memory is an essential part of our Christian heritage. The rituals at the heart of our tradition are based on the deep conviction that all the power of the originating event is present in the act of remembering, in the re-telling of the communal story. Our Eucharistic Celebration as Lawson notes is 'in a very real sense a story-telling event, a time of remembering.'⁴ Memory, the effort to recall something we collectively knew, is therefore at the heart of every religious event. Thus, within our various Christian traditions, remembering has always been an essential activity of the people of God. In remembering, we affirm the historicity of our faith in God; lament and voice our sufferings; acknowledge our mutual responsibility towards each other and to the earth; and link the past, present and future. Within our history, Christians hold on to this "dangerous memory"⁵ by voicing the saving act of God in Jesus Christ.

Feminist theology, however, posits that repressed memories are the key to shaping us as individuals and as a society. Introducing memory as a heuristic lens for a transformative theology, the method of feminist theology validates the lives of women in the Church, both past and present, by remembering, affirming and glorifying their contributions. Remembering and re-membering thus becomes important moments in theologizing for the future of women in the Church. As Peter Hayes reflecting on the holocaust rightly remarks,

4 Veronica Lawson, "Vatican II : In Hope and Memory: The Power of Vatican II and the Structures of Power" in *Australian E Journal of Theology*, Online Version downloaded on 16.04.2006 from the website http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aet_1/Lawson.htm

5 Bruce T. Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue*, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005) Bruce Morrill brings political theology and Orthodoxy into a challenging and constructive engagement. He persuasively argues that the Church's Eucharistic liturgy, where the remembrance of the one victim is shown to be the prayerful remembrance of all victims, is a sacramental expression of Christian solidarity and the graced impulse to Christian praxis. This is what he calls dangerous memory. Thus, the Eucharist as a recovery of the Jewish covenant provides the normative understanding of genuine Christian memory.

Everyone must remember the past and act to prevent such things happening again. The preservation of memory is important. It is a distressing thought given the tendency of people to forget and of history to repeat.⁶

The contribution of this paper has to be contextualized within the general theme of this anthology, namely, "The Mea Culpa of John Paul II" which is an analytical, critical and historical investigation of the Church's chequered history with specific reference to the different groups that the Church has sinned against in the past. As part of her appeal for purification from memory, the Church during the public confession of faults, prayed for women, who are 'too often humiliated and marginalized.' The Church in her articulations also acknowledged the "forms of acquiescence in the sins against women of which Christians, too, have been guilty." Pope John Paul II at various occasions confessed that the 'equality of your sons and daughters has not been acknowledged, and Christians have been guilty of attitudes of rejection and exclusion.' Such confessions can be seen as a public acknowledgment that sins against women are sins against the other half of humanity and therefore affect the human family as a whole.

The papal document "Memory and Reconciliation" highlights that though residues of the past can militate against putting aside the burdens of memory, reparations can lead to reconciliation as a prerequisite for the healing of injustices. Memory can cease to be encumbering if it becomes 'an affirmation of existence and a resolve in defence of unborn generations.' If the public act of remembering and articulation of the memory of the past is, as feminists rightly note, in support of self-examination, an end to hatred and becoming better human beings, then it should be heard. Therefore it is not enough merely to remember the past; one must remember the truth, analyse it, derive rules from it and desire to act.

The role memory plays in the resurgence of marginal groups, through the reconstruction of their identities is a subject that has been

6 Peter Hayes, *Lessons and Legacies: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, (Illinois: North western University Press, 1991)7

analysed by scholars in a rather extensive manner. Feminist views on remembering has been coloured mainly by two perspectives. The first approach presents memory as cognition and awareness – a discursive activity, the second outlook presents memory as remembering the dismembered.

Memory as Cognition - Remembering the Experience

Reminiscing or evoking the past in this approach are envisioned as an exercise of taking cognisance and creating awareness of women's presences by highlighting their absences. Christian feminist theology lives out of memory and vision. It remembers and retrieves the lost stories of wholeness, courage and inclusiveness of community, which are buried under the 'dominant' (male) and 'official' (Church) tradition. Feminist theologians like Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, for instance, evoke the memories of New Testament women, very important to the Jesus event, as a significant type of empowering memory.⁷ African feminists highlight the memories of women like Perpetua and Felicity as a strand of protest Christianity as part of the Christian heritage of women.⁸ The point of retrieving these memories is to stress the importance of women in the church - as the People of God - where this has been lost sight of in the general awareness of the church. It is very often the case that women have been 'written out'.

Such retrieval is also accompanied by reclamation of the existential experiences of the feminine church, which has the resources to address the culture of today, perhaps even more powerfully, by re-contextualising the symbols of the Christian tradition. To give an example, we take the notion of 'wilderness'. Women can address this differently from their own experiences of 'exclusion' from church structures. Furthermore, the very notion of 'wilderness' can take on another meaning, as can the symbols of manna, milk and honey. Wilderness can be a place to 'dwell' and not just to 'wander' and

7 For such an approach see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1983).

8 See M. Oduyoye, *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1992) 33-45.

'march'. The experiences of women remain rich here if only they can be utilized.⁹ Remembering and reconstruction thus affirms women's historical existence and claims women's historical subjectivity by a revalorisation of women's participation and agency.¹⁰

Memory as Re-membering the Dismembered

Re-membering foregrounds memory as a social and political act of restoring the dismembered in order to make them whole again and in the process to make the Church whole again. Such a process of embellishing highlights the fact that women's bodies have been sites of violence both in Church and in society. Women's bodies have suffered violation in different ways specifically through outright violence, through objectification by media and silencing through religious language.

Reconciliation is possible only if the truth is acknowledged in all its entirety and rawness and when a restructuring of community in favour of the marginalised take place. Such a restructuring must genuinely bring about the empowerment of women. Empowerment means offering opportunities for women to grow to the best of their capacities in a total freedom. It is important for the victims, the perpetrators and for the community as a whole, that this healing process does take place. Otherwise denial constitutes a pathway to continued violence and the perpetuation of the crime. Structurally imposed silences by power interests, fear and pain often block this process.

Religious patriarchy has promoted in the Church unjust power relations between men, women and children. This unequal distribution of power is manifested through sexual abuse, discrimination, denial of the space and possibilities for women's enhancement and leadership within the Church. Moreover it forbids the victims to talk about the aggression even if it is sexual abuse and makes the victims internalise

9 M. Monunwa, "Femininity in African Cosmology: Paradoxes and Ambiguities" in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 44, 1992, 131-143.

10 See Shalini Mulakal, "Politische Ökonomie der Partizipation: Frauen im Leben und Auftrag der Kirche" in Choe & Meuthrath (eds.) *Das Schweigen brechen: Asiatische Theologinnen ringen um die befreiende Dimension des Glaubens*. (Freiburg: Herder, 2005) 161-175.

shame and oppression. Such structural violence has been legitimised and glorified through spirituality and religious language. It has led to cultures of domination and discrimination such as patriarchy and caste within the Church. In many contexts, through structural amnesia, the context for remembering has been deliberately made impossible. Women have been silenced or rendered invisible and there are important issues of theology and different understandings of sin that determine the attitudes of the church. The Church has also been guided by racist and colonial interests. In situations in which injustice and impunity prevail and remain unaddressed, repetitive violence can occur. Accompanying this and following from many of these forms, there is an unholy silence over the related exploitation of the earth.

Feminist theology affirms that the act of re-membering the victims of violence is an act in hope that God breathes new life into the bones (cf. Ezekiel 37). It is an affirmation of the spirit of Pentecost that effected a new community in which all find a common ground and understanding in spite of the differences. In other words, in a process of healing and reconciliation, the victims respond to God's purposes by re-constructing themselves, re-membering the society and re-affirming the integrity of creation ("divine weakness is stronger than human strength": 1 Cor. 1.25). Finally, it is a fulfillment of the hope that the victims of violence are received into the new heaven and the new earth where all tears are wiped away and where there will be no more death and no more grief (Rev 21:4).

Such an act of rejuvenation will draw upon new theological resources. A befitting example of such a process can be seen in the rich *han* of the minjung theology of Korea. The *Minjung* are the economically poor, politically weak, socially deprived people, but who are at the same time culturally and historically rich and powerful. *Han* is an underlying feeling of the Korean Minjung people. On the one hand, it is a dominant feeling of defeat, resignation, and nothingness; on the other, it is a feeling accompanied by a tenacity of will for life, which comes to weaker beings. The latter aspect could erupt as the energy for a revolution or rebellion. The *han* of the Minjung people is a resource for healing. The trauma of the victims is overcome through a realisation of their inherent potential for a new life. The victims need to *han*, to cut the desire for revenge or the danger of

fatalism. Through many forms of ritual, worship and prayer, particularly in the Eucharist, liberating strands and a horizon of open future are offered. In the dangerous memory of suffering and humiliation, new life is made possible.¹¹ Similarly is *Gacaca*, a traditional process in Rwanda used to resolve conflicts within the communities and between neighbouring communities. It is a process in which responsibilities for various crimes are identified in a dialogue, which involves both the perpetrators and the victims.¹²

Feminist theology affirms that only when memory is accompanied by a process of structural justice, physical and social healing and reaffirmation of the subjecthood of women, only then can an activity like memory and reconciliation bring healing. In order to facilitate a genuine and radical restoration of women we must understand the past. It is important to note that the structural defacing of women in the Church was grounded on a theology and philosophy, which was unhealthy. In order to get a grasp of the Church's approach to women in the past, it is important that we analyze the complexities and ramifications of these philosophies. The following pages will explore the relationship of the Church regarding women in different stages with specific reference to the philosophy and theology that informed such an approach.¹³

The Pre-Vatican Church and Women

Feminist theologians have clearly exposed through copious examples

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- 11 Report of the Theological Consultation on Affirming human dignity, rights of peoples and the integrity of creation, *World Council of Churches: Commission on Faith and Order*, Kigali, Rwanda, 4-9 December 2004, Online version downloaded from the website http://72.14.221.104/search?q=cache:At9bjEYW8yIJ:www.wcccoe.org/wcc/what/faith/kigali_en.doc+remembering+the+dismembered+in+feminist+theology&hl=de&gl=de&ct=clnk&cd=1 on 05.05.2006.
 - 12 Timothy. C. Morgan, "Healing Genocide," in *Christianity Today*, April 2004, Vol. 48, No. 4, 76
 - 13 This part of the paper is a summary of an article presented by the author at the Conference of the 40th anniversary of Vatican II held in JDV, Pune in 2005. Cfr. Pushpa Joseph, "Women's Question in the Vatican Discourse: An Analysis", presented at the Symposium on Vatican II held at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, October 2005.

and illustrations the underlying theological and philosophical prejudices against women prevalent in Pre-Vatican theology. Illustrating their arguments with well-documented examples they capture the basic mood of Pre-Vatican discourse on women. Feminist analysis have unequivocally highlighted that Pre-Vatican theology attributed at least four significant deficiencies to women - Ontological, Epistemological, Theological and Eschatological.¹⁴

The ancient Church's perception of women is best manifested in its distorted definition of the *Imago Dei* and the manner in which it was applied to the identity of women. *Imago Dei* as a theological term, applied uniquely to humans, denotes the symbolical relation between God and humanity. The term has its roots in Genesis 1:27, wherein "God created man and woman in his own image . . ." This scriptural passage means that humans are in the image of God in their moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature. Thus, humans mirror God's divinity in their ability to actualize the unique qualities with which they have been endowed, and which make them different from all other creatures. The term *imago Dei* refers most fundamentally to two things: first, God's own self-actualization through humankind; and second, God's care for humankind. To say that humans are in the image of God is to recognize the special qualities of human nature, through which God is manifest in humans. In other words, for humans to have the conscious recognition of their being in the image of God means that they are the creatures through whom God's plans and purposes can be made known and actualized; humans, in this way, can be seen as co-creators with God.

In Pre-Vatican theology, however, women's salvational equivalence or women's *Imago Dei* was realized only by becoming male or by attaining perfect manhood in Christ. Kari Elisabeth Borrisson highlights that the Pre-Vatican definition of men's exclusive Godlikeness is prevalent in *new Adam-new Eve* typology. She writes,

Androcentric gender asymmetry is here transposed from the first human couple to the order of salvation. Godlike Adam

14 Brother Andy and Father Eugene, "An Entertaining Discussion on Whether Women are Human Beings or Not" Online Version, downloaded from world website <http://www.women-church.org/> on 13.08.2005, p.4.

prefigures Christ, who as new Adam and divine Redeemer is incarnated in perfect manhood. Non-Godlike Eve prefigures the church/Mary, who as new Eve represents dependent and therefore gynecomorphic humanity. These theological gender models remain fundamental in both Orthodox and Catholic Christology, ecclesiology and Mariology....¹⁵

Pre-Vatican theology thus prescribed to the notion of women as inferior, weak natured and evil. This was also buttressed by references to Greek philosophers whose philosophy formed the underpinnings of Scholastic theology, which was the main theology of the times.

The ancient and long standing view of man as hierarchically superior and woman as subordinate survived in the Catholic Church till the middle of the twentieth century. The radical changes that occurred in the social, political and cultural fields made the inferior notion of women unsustainable. In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which assigned identical rights to men and women, marked a fundamental breakthrough towards a new world order. Thus starting in the 1960s, with the re-emergence of the women's movement, a new self-awareness of women made itself vigorously manifest. In 1975 the United Nations' Women's Year motivated a universal attempt to put an end to the subordination of women.

In the Church Vatican II brought important and radical changes in the approach of Catholic theology towards women. The new definition of the church as the People of God, in which all the baptized are equal, offered hopeful perspectives. It was expected by many that the Council's new approach to the man-woman relationship would also have its effects within the Church. This hope also found support in Pope John XXIII's encyclical '*Pacem in Terris*' of 1963, which identified the women's emancipation movement as one of the 'signs of the times' and for the first time had positive response to it.

Women and Vatican II – A Revitalizing Transformation

15 Kari Elisabeth Borrisson, "The Ordination of Women: To Nurture Tradition by Continuing Inculturation," in *Studia Theologica* 46 (1992) pp. 3-13

The shift initiated by Vatican II opened new vistas in the liberation envisaged by women. With its emphasis on social justice and lay ministries, it signaled an increase in the roles of women. The result of the influx of women at different levels of the church has been the enriching of the church as it continues on its pilgrim journey to God. However it is important to note that despite this transformation brought about by Vatican II in the Church's perspectives to women, somehow a discriminatory attitude to women continued to be propagated.

Firstly in the Conciliar documents women as a category are more conspicuous by their absence. Feminist theologians for instance rightly note that the "word '*mulieres*' is not used too often alone in the documents, but is often found in the expression '*virī et mulieres*', or is understood from the context of the passages.

Secondly, a reflection on the feminine symbols used in the Conciliar documents reflects the "underlying attitude towards women through the use of symbolic language". (See for example LG 7,8,9) Some of the symbols employed are Eve/Mary used with the traditional significance of death and life, mother and bride to signify the Church. Though these symbols are part of our Christian legacy it is important to ask whether they are truly compatible today with the Conciliar doctrine of male and female equivalence in human and Christian dignity: woman is presented in terms that do little to show the mutuality and equality of both men and women.

Thirdly, feminists note that though the documents inscribe affirmative proclamations about the significance of womanhood in the realm of marriage and also highlight the active and contributive roles played by men and women in the procreation of children (G.S. 48) the Vatican Documents do not declare mutuality of responsibility for childcare. For example *Gaudium et Spes* says,

The active presence of the father is highly beneficial to their formation. The children, especially the younger among them, need the care of their mother at home. This domestic role of hers must be safely preserved, though the legitimate social progress of women should not be underrated on that account (G.S., 52).

As many feminists argue "though seemingly aware of a need for concern in the area of child care, the above passage- falls back (albeit

somewhat apologetically) on the assumption that woman has either 'natural' or 'assigned' domestic role; whereas the father's presence is 'highly beneficial', certainly not essential'. Nonetheless it is important to highlight that despite this possible weakness, the great change from looking on the familial structure as male-centered, to one that is mutually participatory and responsible for both spouses, is one of the great advances presented in the second Vatican Council that will continue to have liberating influence on women.

Fourthly, feminists argue that the Vatican document, when it talks about women, generally refer to dependency relationships that may occur in a woman's life: it speaks to daughters, wives, mothers, widows. One might argue that these relationships might not have been considered from a dependant perspective. However the point is that women are spoken to with reference to their sexual-relational roles and not in terms of their existential realities as human beings or in terms of their personhood. As a result though the message presents a grasp of women's changed milieu, it shows little evidence of women's right to be considered as a mature, responsible person, capable of self-determination in the area of her roles, her activities, her mutuality with man in the establishment of the Kingdom. In addition, the 'specificity of women' no more needs safeguarding than the specificity of men, if both are taken as normatively human.

Thus we see that Vatican II clearly brought about a marked renewal of transformation in the theological approach to womanhood. Nonetheless we still encounter numerous references presenting women in their traditional patriarchal 'roles' and not in terms of their independent self-realization. Despite the universality and emphatic nature of positive declarations on womanhood feminists rightly argue that in many instances a kind of subtle discrimination is evident. Such a discrimination is visible for example in the Council's male-centered approach visible in its articulations on family and the process of reproduction or in the 'protective discrimination' which is evident in some of the pronouncements.

In sum it needs to be emphasized that the Council's texts and the subsequent Vatican documents no longer speak of a 'state of

subordination' for women. Pope Paul VI's addresses chose a more modern vocabulary when discussing the role of women. But most catholic women considered this adaptation of vocabulary insufficient as long as no practical consequences were drawn regarding equal responsibility in the church. What women think with regard to this discrepancy between the discourse and the act is poignantly articulated in these words,

The governing structure of the Holy See includes no women in policy making and no women in the church's single existing electoral body, the College of Cardinals. There is no requirement that women be consulted regarding the development or content of Vatican documents, including this report — and no indication that such consultation occurred voluntarily. Our experience of the hierarchy of the church is that — beyond mere yea-saying roles — women are almost always excluded from consultations on their condition and needs.¹⁶

In addition it also needs to be said that the Vatican texts about women show no consistency: they do discuss certain aspects, but a systematic anthropological and theological foundation remains absent in the Vatican documents.

Women and Post-Vatican II Era

Post Vatican II understanding of women can be seen in the Apostolic Letter of 1988, *Mulieris dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women). Pope John Paul II clearly articulates the theological and philosophical position of the Church, when he affirms that in an equal way men and women are human persons, but a specific difference keeps them apart. In summary he affirms that there is a fundamental equality and at the same time a basic difference. It follows then that women and men are equal partners and oriented towards each other. Therefore any form of male domination is to be rejected.

16 Women-Church Convergence, "Equal Is As Equal Does: Catholic Support For Family Planning: A Catholic Feminist Commentary on the Report of the Holy See in Preparation For the Fourth World Conference on Women," Online Version downloaded from the website on 16.09.2005 <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/articles/equallong.asp>

Pope John Paul II also affirms that the life choices in which women experience their dignity and vocation are motherhood and virginity; that is: as married mothers or consecrated virgins (= spiritual motherhood). It needs to be highlighted that in the understanding of the Church on womanhood alternate ways of life remain out of sight. Besides, what women themselves think gets no attention. Thus as René van Eyden notes, "What we are offered is no more than an abstract and universalist dissertation on 'woman': the personal experiences of women in our time and in various parts of the world do not play a role, and their social situation is ignored."¹⁷

The documents published even in recent times present motherhood as catholic women's physical and spiritual vocation in the Church.¹⁸ The point is that the way the Church looks at women is not based on the idea that motherhood is one element of what it is to be a woman, but rather that motherhood defines womanhood. Thus being a female person is one-sidedly and excessively defined by biological characteristics. It is possible to identify a submerged notion of the archetypal feminine in the document and in its construction of Catholic womanhood. The fulfillment of a woman's life here is limited to motherhood.¹⁹ Feminists argue that there exists a gap between the way the Vatican speaks of 'woman' and women's actual life spheres. Women do no longer define themselves merely on the basis of their

17 René van Eyden, "The Creation of Womanhood: A Hierarchical Construction," in René Van Eyden, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza & Mary E. Hunt (eds.), *Women and Vatican II*, (Sao Paulo: Publications CDD, 2001) 79.

18 See also the Document from the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church*, May 31st, 2004.

19 Maithreyi Krishnaraj, "Motherhood: Power and Powerlessness" in Jasodhara Bagchi (eds.), *Indian Women: Myth and Reality*, (Hyderabad: Sangam Books, 1995) 34-43. Her article illustrates the manner in which maternal responsibility is used as an alibi to exclude women from power, decision making and a participatory role in public life in the Indian context. A woman's procreative role was originally a source of power. However it has been rendered powerless through its subjection to male domination. Considered as a field in possession of the owner of the seed i.e. semen, motherhood makes a woman

capacity to become mothers but, as independently thinking and acting persons, they incorporate the full human vocation into their self-definition.

In Post Vatican II documents, the anthropological model of mutual complementarity has replaced the older assertion of the natural inferiority of women. This is an important improvement: as subjects and in their human dignity men and women are fully equal. But, as René van Eyden rightly argues, "the gap is not really bridged: the biological differences represent an essential difference in natures. From this dualistic view of the human person normative directives are derived for different roles and functions of women and men, both in society and in the church."²⁰

Inconsistencies of a Dualistic Anthropology

Analytical and critical evaluations of church documents confront us with the inconsistencies on the church's notion on women. On the one hand it teaches that it is important and even unjust to deny freedom to women. Yet on the other hand the same church bars women from equal status. In order to capture the theoretical underpinnings of the Church's stand on the women's question it is important to sketch the anthropological foundations of church documents.

The dualistic anthropology of complementarity reiterates the politics of meaning generated by the dualistic sex/gender system. It operates with the underlying concept of the two natures of humanity, according to which women and men are by nature essentially different from each other. In such an anthropological outlook sexual difference becomes elevated to an ontological norm dividing human beings into

susceptible to male domination. Maternal responsibility is used as an alibi to exclude a woman from power, decision and a participatory role in public life. Motherhood and mothering perceived as bringing forth of new life and its sustenance, so essential to human survival, paradoxically become instruments of subordination. The feminist dilemma therefore points out Maithreyi Krishnaraj is how to retrieve motherhood as a source of liberation. This is different from glorification of motherhood that equates it to self-denial.

20 René van Eyden, "The Creation of Womanhood: A Hierarchical Construction," in René Van Eyden, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza & Mary E. Hunt (eds.), *Women and Vatican II*, (Sao Paulo: Publications CDD, 2001) 76.

two separate types. Women are cast as polar opposites of men and the differences between them are maximized. Such a manner of viewing human nature and Christian discipleship expressed in two essentially different modes of being human led in Christian tradition and theology to the denigration of women on the one hand and to the glorification and mythologization of the feminine on the other. This kind of a male/female dualism when combined with the classic body/spirit dualism defines man by his mind and reason and woman as determined by her nature and sexuality. Masculine nature thus with its propensity to rationality, order and decision-making is equipped for leadership in the public realm. Feminine nature on the other hand with its inclination to love, life and nurturing is suitable for the private domain of child bearing, home making and care for the vulnerable. With its roots in Hellenistic philosophy this system of gender dualism engenders subordination of women by underscoring that women are not only different from men but are also inferior to them.

The teaching of the papacy about women has generally fallen into the anthropology of complementarity type.²¹ Although the Church emphatically affirms that women and men are equal, in holding fast to the distinctive qualities of women's nature, and buttressing their significance with appeal to the model of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God the church documents prescribe to an equal but different anthropology. This runs into the danger of resulting in a kind of romantic feminism. Such a perspective identifies women with their reproductive function, thereby praising them as virgins and mothers and cautioning them about losing their femininity in the search for equality. Women are so ordered to love that they are almost too good to get involved in the messiness of the public realm. Even the document *Mulieris Dignitatem* is based on an equal but different anthropology.

There are two kinds of theological anthropologies in conflict. One is the wholistic anthropology promoted by feminist theologians. In a wholistic anthropology sexual difference does not become the sole marker of identity. It realizes that there are overlapping layers of

21 See Richard Leonard S.J., *Beloved Daughters: 100 Years of Papal Teaching on Women*, ((Melbourne, Australia : David Lovell Pub., 1995)

contingencies which all go to make the formation of identity. Some of the other factors are race, class, caste, linguistic, ethnic, historical, geographic and cultural differences. In addition such a view does not consider the diversity of personal characteristics to be predetermined by sex but ranges across a wide spectrum for both women and men. The dualistic anthropology of complementarity on the other hand elevates sexual difference to an ontological norm thus dividing human beings into two separate types. Women are cast as polar opposites of men and the differences between them are maximized. Such an anthropology has been used very often to create an understanding of women merely as 'wives' or 'mothers.' Women are not allowed to be independent and free human persons. Feminist critiques of culture have also shown that women themselves have interiorized the image and understanding of women as inferior and derivative. Often women themselves strongly believe and defend the 'feminine mystique.' Women have learned to feel inferior and to despise themselves. So they do not respect, in fact they even hate other women. Christian ethics intensifies the internalization of the feminine by propagating passive attitudes like submission, self-sacrifice, and self-denying love. Schüssler Fiorenza notes, "The alleged 'voluntarism' of the imposed submission in Christian patriarchy has turned women against themselves more deeply than ever disguising and reinforcing the internalization process."²²

The Vatican's equal but different model is built on a patriarchal anthropology, namely, an anthropology, which presumes that men are the human norm and women are different. Implicit throughout the Vatican documents is a vision of women and men in which men are normative persons and women are primarily understood in terms of their reproductive and mothering capacities. The laudable ideal of women's dignity is delimited by the supposition that women's dignity is somehow based in reproductive capacity. In my opinion her

22 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation" in Walter Burkhardt (ed) *Woman: New Dimensions*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1977) 29-50. See 32. First published in *Theological Studies* 36(1975): 606-626.

humanity should become the basis for understanding her dignity and not merely a patriarchal notion of womanhood, which equates it to merely wifehood or motherhood. The roles of women in family life, in the work place, and in politics are all limited when understood in relation to this anthropology. Nothing accrues to women simply because they are human. The Church could do well to reconstruct its anthropological foundations if its discourses on women's well-being are to be taken seriously.

The 'Mea Culpa' in Perspective

Every society should take its worst wrongs and examine them carefully so as to remember what truly must be remembered. As George Santayana says, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".²³ It is not enough merely to remember the past. We must remember the truth, analyse it, derive rules from it and desire to act. The Christian notion of remembrance too as implied in the Greek word *anamnesis* shows that the Church's ritual action of remembering our salvation in Christ not only inspires but demands action in the world.²⁴ Based on such an understanding, *Memory and Reconciliation*²⁵ identifies two pastoral aims for the Church's action of taking responsibility for past faults. The first aim is purification of memory which is 'a process aimed at a new evaluation of the past, capable of having a considerable effect on the present.' A second pastoral aim is the promotion of the continual reform of the People of God. In the light of these aims it is possible to affirm that the Church too understands memory not only as a process of remembering but also as a simultaneous activity of restoring. Such an approach, I claim, calls for three significant transformations, which can bring about a new future for women in the Church. This also means that the Church should take women's experiences within the Church seriously.

23 George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Volume 1, 1905 Quoted from *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*.

24 For such an analysis see Bruce T. Morill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue*, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005)

25 The International Theological Commission's Document, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*, December 1999.

A Future Church Shaped by Women's Experiences

The first and most obvious implication of *Memory and Reconciliation* is to consciously oppose all domination and oppression at whatever level it appears in the Church. This is because it affects not only women but also the whole body of the Church. In its place is the vision of mutuality, which grounds the church in just structures of inter-relationship. In this way the root meaning of *ecclesia* as emerging from the Divine fellowship, the household of God (Father, Son and Spirit) where just relationships order is truly realized. The Church thus exists in a web of unconditional relation. It must therefore foster relationships of equality and mutuality among men and women. The Church must consciously recognize that those most lacking in equality and mutuality at this time in our society are women, especially those women who are impoverished by different factors. We, women in the Church, must also recognize that we have a special ecclesial identity and role. This means educating men and women in the Church to a fuller understanding of the inherent dignity, equality and giftedness of women as persons created in the image of God.

Such an approach calls for a radical *metanoia*, a change and a re-direction. It presupposes a transformation of hearts and minds from estrangement and a journey towards the recovery of just 'connections'. Revelation, from women's perspectives, as Linda E. Thomas says, refers to "experiences of connection where God's presence and Grace are discovered and celebrated among people struggling for right relationships".²⁶ This calls for a much closer relationship between God/World/Spirit/Church than what traditional theology generally permits. The work of feminist theologians presents the world as God's body.²⁷ Such an approach gives emphasis to the organic link between the being of God and the cosmos, without in any way limiting the

26 Linda E. Thomas, "Womanist Theology, Epistemology and a New Anthropological Paradigm," in *Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life*, 48/4 (Winter 98/99) 3.

27 Sally McFague, "The World as God's Body," in *The Christian Century*, July 20-27, 1998, 671-673.

being of God to the cosmos or a total identification with it and *enfleshes* the meaning of the 'travail of all creation' as also the travail of God".²⁸

Secondly a public act of purification of memory should urge the church to reformulate the relationship between hierarchy and authority. It draws us back to what is called the *sensus fidelium* (faithful sense) of faith in the church as the real source of authority. In this it reflects Vatican II model of the church as 'People of God'. In other words, it looks to the ecological Christ rather than Paul's image of Christ as Head of the Body. From Christ's call for unity it envisages a more radical ecumenism. From the shared experiences by women of exclusion, of being an 'outsider' to the tradition and official memory, women from many Christian denominations (including Jewish/Christian women) have commenced the process of dialogue. From the experiences of women deprived of status and power has come the realization that being authentically Christian and exercising the ministry of our baptism means empowering and enabling oneself and others to be fully human.

Thirdly it helps us understand that ministry exercised in mutuality involves a very different understanding of power. However, this does not signify that roles of leadership will disappear in a collapse into a vague mutuality. It highlights that power structures within the Church and society can be defined differently. As McFague rightly affirms, it means that "Responsible accountability can be given corporate or communal meaning in different ways. Power can become power for and with the community. And Christian compassion is given a communal and not a privatized expression. It only becomes power against when harnessed in political protest for liberation."²⁹

While the historical events of the life of Jesus are over, the 'claim' on our faith is ever present, it remains as a memory, which both makes a claim and demands a response on our part. It is a word that shatters

28 Linda E. Thomas, "Womanist Theology, Epistemology and a New Anthropological Paradigm," in *Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life*, 48/4 (Winter 98/99) 7.

29 Sally McFague, "The World as God's Body," in *The Christian Century*, July 20-27, 1998, 671-673.

our existing vision and summons us to seize the relational energy ourselves - a creative and redeeming energy. It is the energy for inclusive community and compassionate love, which enlarges the bounds of love, as we know it. Rooted in a passionate care for the range of how being can be expressed and a patient attention for relation, the church lives from a spirituality of solidarity in suffering as a protest against suffering in order to prevent anyone from being crucified again.

Conclusion

The insights from women's experiences show important implications for the enlargement of a Christian tradition, which has for many centuries forgotten women's contributions. The experiences of women help to create a new perspective on the meaning of being Church. Women within such an *ecclesia*, formed through the Discipleship of equals, can utilize their theological, political and mystical insights for the Christian tradition of faith. They will then represent a new paradigm of the 'self', not as severed and individualistic, but as an empathetic and ecological self committed to the struggle for justice and re-establishing relationality. This has huge implications for the praxis of the Church which becomes here an open house focused on the way ahead for humankind.

Department of Christian Studies
University of Madras
Chennai - 600 005

